Mermaids After the End

A Post-Apocalyptic, Transhumanist, Oceanic Tabletop Roleplaying Game

v2.0

CORE RULEBOOK

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To Readers and Players:

Thank you very much for your interest in *Mermaids After the End*!

The main idea behind this game was first conceived from a randomly generated prompt for the "24 Hour RPG Challenge." Specifically, these three themes: Mermaids, Post-Apocalyptic, and Transhumanism. I was already a big fan of all three so it seemed only natural to try my hand at something more than a single one-page RPG. However, I would be remiss if I did not at least recognize the influences of *Waterworld*, *Xenoblade*, *Gargantia on the Verdurous Planet,* the *Monster Girl Encyclopedia* by Kenkou Cross, *Ghost in the Shell, Star Trek Adventures, Stargate: Atlantis,* and the literary works of Alastair Reynolds. It is my hope that this game turns out more as a pastiche than as a parody.

I have done my best to create a setting where all can express themselves freely, regardless of Race, Gender, Ability, Pronouns, and so forth. All art is meant to be a suggestion of style and not a rigid "It must look like this." You might notice that even between the pages of this book that styles of the same subject can change. What something looks like in your game is up to you. In fact, I encourage you to visualize your characters how you see them without worrying about whether it's "canon" or not.

Transhumanism does not mean that all prejudices and conflict have vanished. They have evolved with the times as all things do. Indeed, you could base an entire campaign or content in general around confronting these issues. The key is in recognizing that this is a work of fiction, and that it does not condone such acts outside of a game's narrative. This does *not* mean that a GM should force their players to deal with scenarios or content that could be harmful out-of-game. I recommend establishing boundaries during Session 0 for this very reason.

Anyways, if you're reading this then we're finally at the (hopefully) full release! It's been a long road, and I hope you'll find that your patience and support have been rewarded.

You can send **me** (ELH) feedback at elhmk1+M8@gmail.com, via Twitter @USHI_Bean, or via Discord

Good or bad, I want to hear it! If even one person has a fun session with this system, I'll be happy.

- ELH

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The signs were always there. The warnings, a plenty. Yet nothing could stop it.

Many millennia ago, in an event called *The Melting*, Humanity's home, *Terra*, underwent a massive global warming event. Some claimed it was due to Humanity's hubris. Others insisted that it was a natural occurrence, a result of a thirteen-million-year cycle. The truth of the matter did not matter in the end. The sea quickly swallowed the land. Humanity (or at least what survived) was forced onto an ever-shrinking shore. Wars over land and resources were commonplace. Mankind was reduced to tribalism as each grouping fought to keep what was theirs. Those that remained called it "The End of Days."

…and yet, the true end came from an external source. In their squabbling, Humanity missed a massive comet before it was too late to divert it. All they could do was watch and lament as the iceball slammed into Terra. The impact and resulting rise in sea level confined the 10 million or so that survived to the land that used to belong to the seven highest mountain peaks. It took many centuries before the survivors realized that the only hope for Humanity was in coming together instead of squabbling over land and resources. A global initiative was formed to this end, entitled the *Atargatis Project*. It worked towards the goal of re-expanding Mankind's foothold on Terra. Specifically, in reclaiming the land which now formed the ocean floor. That meant turning technology inward: in enhancing Human intellect and physiology.

At first, progress on the Atargatis Project was limited. It wasn't until *Professor Durham* achieved a breakthrough in cybernetics 250 years ago that things truly began to change. It became possible to encase a Human brain within a protective case, which in turn could be fitted to any number of cyborg bodies. These bodies enabled Humanity to begin building settlements beneath the waves and harvesting what natural resources were now in reach.

This worked for over 200 years before Humanity reached the limits of their newfound continental shelves. By then, what it meant to express one's self had changed drastically. When one need only swap bodies to don a new "self," prejudices over things like Race, Gender, Ability, and so forth all but vanished. Not entirely, mind you, but enough that such occurrences were the exception and not the norm. What mattered was in how someone could contribute to society, no matter what that function might be.

The face of politics and social strata changed slowly, but surely. Meanwhile, Humanity continued to push its own boundaries. It became possible to store one's consciousness in digital form, moving between bodies the same way humans of old might slip into a new pair of clothes. So long as they remained connected to *Seanet*, the successor to the Internet of old, anyways. Dubbed the *Detachment*, the advent of this technology drastically changed the "Human Condition."

It's been 21 years since the Detachment, also referred to as 21d. Mankind has made great strides in reclaiming their world, yet a vast portion of the ocean remains untouched by human hand. All manner of old knowledge and resources lies within the depths, just waiting to be (re)discovered. Those that find such boons often see themselves elevated socially and politically. One could end up living a simple, idealist lifestyle, if they so chose. And indeed, the allure of such is enough to send many a would-be diver into the dark recesses of the deep.

You are one such individual, a *Hunter*. You've found a collection of comrades who are just as eager as you to "strike it rich," as they once said. Little do you know what *truly* lies beneath the ocean for you…

Chapter 1: Introduction

A brief introduction to roleplaying games and a description of the basic needs of play.

Mermaids After the End (Shortened to MATE or M8) is a narrative-focused tabletop roleplaying game meant to guide stories about adventurers called Hunters seeking fortune in the unknown depths of the post-apocalyptic ocean. They are part of a transhumanist setting that contains some elements of (cosmic) horror.

What is a Tabletop Roleplaying Game?

A tabletop roleplaying game (TTRPG) is a mixture between the structured form found in many games and the open-ended, imagination-driven act of storytelling. It is a collaborative experience where everyone at the table contributes something to the story in their own way. Each Player takes on a persona of a fictional character (known as a Player Character, or "PC"), guiding and acting them out in whatever fashion they see fit. What a TTRPG does is help structure these contributions in a manner that is fair to everyone – A set of agreed upon rules and guidelines that is often moderated by a Game Master (GM).

The role of a GM is important. They are essentially in charge of the entire universe that the rest of the players will interact with. This includes the Non-Player Characters (NPCs) and setting alike. They are also the final arbiter of what is or is not possible during the game. Often times there will be questions from the players as to what a rule means or if a certain rule applies to a given situation. It's up to the GM to make a decision that they judge will be in the best interest of all at the table.

However, that is not to say that only good things happen to the PCs. That's where the element of dice come into play. When an action or outcome is uncertain, a dice roll may be involved. This allows for impartial determination that is reliant on the outcome of the dice and how it functions within a system's rules. A roll could be very simple or very difficult depending on what the circumstances are. Assuming, of course, that dice are used at all. Some groups may prefer a more relaxed style of play where dice takes a backseat to roleplaying. Others might favor a more dice-focused approach. There is no right or wrong answer, only what works for your particular group.

There is much, much more that could be said on this topic, but really the best way to get a feel for what a TTRPG is is to play one yourself!

How to Play

MATE is best played with 3 to 6 players, but can be played with as little as 2 or as many as feels comfortable. To play, we must acquire three things besides players: Time, a Game Master (GM), and Materials.

Time

All participants in a game must set aside some mutual time, commonly referred to as a "session." This typically is 3 to 4 hours of gaming, not including travel or setup. Some groups may run shorter or run longer depending on both availability and what sort of story the GM has prepared. This may seem a simple thing, especially in a world where phones have made digital secretarial work simple. Yet the quickest way to kill a game is in not showing up, especially if you're the GM! That is why it is important to set aside the agreed upon time and to inform everyone in your group as soon as possible if something would affect that. Neglecting to do so would be rude to your fellow players!

Game Master

Also known as the Dungeon Master, Storyteller, and many other monikers, a Game Master is essential to every group. One participant assumes this role, while others take control of the Player Characters. Who among your group becomes GM is something that should be decided upon prior to the actual start of your game. This will allow the GM ample time to study the system, take notes, and prepare material for the game. Alternatively, if someone would rather work off the cuff, or perhaps spontaneously, then by all means, let them. What matters is that someone take the reins!

As mentioned prior, the GM is responsible for three major things:

1. Determining how a Player's declaration translates to the rules
2. Deciding if a given rule applies in a given situation, perhaps making or changing a rule to fit in the process
3. Roleplaying and describing the setting and NPCs in a given scene

As an example of the first item, let's say that a Player wants to try and outswim a pursuer. The GM would consider said pursuer's ability, in addition to that of the Player's character. They must also factor in any environmental effects relevant to the action. If it's immediately obvious that one would overtake the other, then no rolling may be needed. Should the outcome be in doubt, the GM could call for a roll. In this case, an opposed Athletics Task. The winner of this opposed roll would then proceed in whatever manner they see fit.

The second item is a little more complicated than the first. No ruleset (including this one) is going to have a rule for everything. The GM must be flexible and adapt or change the rules as necessary. Returning to the Swimming example above, perhaps a different Player wishes to hamper the pursuer in some fashion. This action could involve something like pushing over a pillar to bar their path. This has no coded rules, and thus the GM must determine what sort of check (if any) pushing this pillar over would require. Then they must decide what the pillar falling means for the pursuer. And so on and so forth.

Thankfully, the third item is a little easier to explain than the second. The GM is in charge of everything in the game's setting, including places, objects, people, and events. They all react dynamically to the actions of the players. It's the GM's job to set the scene and act out any role that isn't being handled by the players themselves. **Much like a movie or TV show, a scene is any series of events that involves different actors from a previous one or the same actors in a new locale.**

Further guidance for GMs is covered later in this document in Chapter 4.

Materials

An imagination is an extremely important tool for any TTRPG. However, you can't use your imagination for everything! Instead, you'll want a few basic items:

- At least one 12-sided dice (referred to as a d12). Ten would be preferable and ten per Player ideal. Multiple dice will be referred to in the following format: 1 twelve-sided die = 1d12, 2 twelve-sided dice = 2d12, etc.
- At least one 4-sided dice (referred to as a d4) for the table. Should a d4 not be available, a d12 can be substituted by dividing the rolled result by 3 and rounding up.
- A character sheet or equivalent note-taking implement to record information
- A means of accessing this document

Though not required, you may also find the following items useful:

- Pictures, tokens, and/or miniatures to represent both PC and NPC alike
- A mat, whiteboard, grid, or otherwise editable mapping surface
- Poker Chips or similar to keep track of Metacurrency
- Props and aids such as music and handouts
- A quiet place to play. There's usually a lot of talking in a given session!
- A table (virtual or otherwise) that everyone can see and hear each other around

Chapter 2: The PANTS System

Yes, it is rather ironic that a Mermaid game uses pants.

The **Pool and Number Target System** (PANTS) is a d12-based system. The basic idea behind it is very straightforward: You roll a number of d12s equal to an **Attribute** and then compare each result to a relevant **Skill.** For every die that comes up equal to or lower than your Skill, you score one success. A more in-depth explanation of Attributes and Skills can be found in Chapter 3.

Example: Brittney's character, Lucia, is attempting to decipher the inner workings of a piece of ancient technology. The GM rules that this will involve Lucia's Intelligence (6) and her Ancient Tech Skill (7). Brittney then rolls six d12s and comes up with the following results: 4, 2, 8, 5, 11, and 10. This means she has scored a total of three successes!

The number of successes is then compared against a **Difficulty** as set by the GM. **The GM should tell you what the Difficulty is prior to your roll. By default, all tasks have a Difficulty of 1**, meaning that you must roll one or more successes to pass. Difficulty can range in value from 0 to 6 as outlined below:

- **Difficulty 0** – *Routine Task, usually meant to help generate Metacurrency for the Players*
- **Difficulty 1 –** *Straightforward Task. Something an average character can succeed at.*
- **Difficulty 2** – *Moderate Task. A skilled character can pass this with ease most of the time.*
- **Difficulty 3** – *Challenging Task*. *A character with special expertise will pass this most of the time.*
- **Difficulty 4** – *Hard Task. A skilled character would be hard-pressed to succeed.*
- **Difficulty 5** – *Very Hard Task. Even the most skilled and talented character will be pushed to their limits.*
- **Difficulty 6** – *Nearly Impossible Task. Succeeding at such a Task is the stuff of legends.*

Even if you are unskilled at something (meaning you only have a score of 1 in that Skill), you may still attempt a Task by reversing your Attribute and Skill scores. This allows you to roll a single d12 against the relevant Attribute. This permits all players the ability to attempt and/or assist other players at Tasks they are not skilled in.

Criticals

If two or more dice roll as a 1, and there are enough successes to pass the Difficulty, then a **Critical Success** has been achieved. Either the actor doing the rolling or the GM may add additional, positive effects and flavor to their success.

Example: Lucia is still working on that bit of Ancient Tech. The GM tells her that she must pass a Difficulty 3 check to gain additional insight. She then rolls a 1, 1, 9, 3, 8, and 5 for a total of four successes. Not only does she pass the check, but something beneficial also happens! In this case, Lucia opts to flavor her crit as the device beginning to reactivate and work as intended instead of remaining defunct!

If two or more dice roll as a 12, but there are still enough successes to pass the Difficulty, then a **Messy Critical** has been achieved. Either the actor doing the rolling or the GM may add additional, negative effects and flavor to their success. Alternatively, the GM may opt to take 2 Risk (See Metacurrency)

Example: Consider the same premise as the above, only this time Lucia rolls a 12, 1, 3, 5, 12, and 11 for a total of three successes. She has passed the check but caused something to go wrong in the process. In this case, the GM opts to flavor the Messy Critical as the device and a nearby trap activating.

If two or more dice roll as a 12, and there are not enough successes to pass the Difficulty, then a **Complication** has occurred. Either the actor doing the rolling or the GM may add additional, negative effects and flavor to their failure. Alternatively, the GM may opt to take 4 Risk (See Metacurrency)

Example: Again, consider the same premise as the above. Lucia has rolled poorly: 9, 8, 12, 12, 4, and 2 for a total of two successes. This is not enough to pass the check, and in her attempt, she's caused something negative to happen. In this case, the GM opts to cause a nearby trap to activate in response to Lucia's presence. The GM also might have simply said that the device Lucia is working on becomes permanently defunct.

In the event that multiple 1s and multiple 12s have been rolled and it's still a success, then both the effects of a Critical Success **and** a Messy Critical apply. I.e. you must add both a positive and a negative effect to your success.

Succeeding at Cost

The GM can decide that a given Task will succeed no matter the number of successes rolled. However, this also means that failing to get the requisite successes means that the GM can introduce a negative effect or flavor just like in Messy Critical and Complications. They can also opt to take 2 Risk (See Metacurrency)

Example: The dice have not been kind to Alex. They have rolled a 12, 10, 12, 8, and 2 against a target of 5 and a Difficulty of 2. This is already a Complication thanks to those 12s, but the GM rules that Alex can still Succeed at Cost. That cost is that something hinders or disrupts Alex's plan, though they are barely successful at it all the same.

Opposing Rolls

An **Opposing Roll** occurs whenever two actors are working against one another in some fashion, such as during combat. Each actor rolls their dice and then compares their total number of successes past their Difficulty to one another. The actor with the most successes is considered to have won the Opposing Roll, and thus their action takes effect. In the case of a tie, the actor that is being targeted (i.e. the Defender) wins the Opposing Roll. Should neither actor achieve enough successes to beat their Difficulty, then the action fails completely with no ill effects to either party.

Example: Thomas is being attacked by a shark. Both roll their Dexterity + Melee Weapons at Difficulty 1. Thomas scores 2 total successes, while the shark only scores 1. This means Thomas has won the melee contest and thus may opt to strike the shark back with his melee weapon for no additional cost!

Assisting

A given task or action may be performed by several individuals at once. In such an instance, one person nominates themselves as the lead. They roll as normal, while all others assisting roll only one d12 versus the relevant attribute. There is no penalty to there being only one assist. However, past that, the messy critical/complication range increases by 1 for every person assisting. In other words, two people assisting would make that range an 11 to 12, while three would make it 10 to 12, and so on and so forth.

Metacurrency

Metacurrency is the concept that certain outcomes rolled on the dice can add to a resource pool. This resource pool can then be spent on enhancing your roll or perhaps hindering another's. There are two types of Metacurrency: **Drive** and **Risk**.

Drive

Drive is a shared resource pool among all of the Players (not including the GM). Any Player can use this pool at any point so long as there is consensus at the table. Adding to the pool happens whenever a Player rolls more successes than is required to pass a given task. For every two extra successes that exceed the Difficulty, one point is added to the Drive pool. The Player *cannot* reduce their successes to the point where they would no longer pass the task. **The Drive pool can hold up to six points and typically resets to zero at the start of every session**.

Example: Steve rolls especially well against his target of 6: 1, 2, 5, 1, 10, 6 for a total of five successes (including a Critical Success!) As this was only a Difficulty 3 Task, Steve can shift two of his successes to gain 1 point of Drive for himself and the rest of the Players. He cannot shift any more than that because he would then not have enough successes (3) to pass the Task.

Risk

Risk is a resource pool purely for the GM. By default, they start each session with two points of Risk for every Player at the table. Unlike the Players, the GM cannot generate Risk on their own. Instead, they are reliant on the Players to produce Risk for them. The primary generation method is tied to Messy Criticals and Complications. A Player can opt to convert the additional negative effect into two Risk for the GM. **There is no limit to how much Risk a GM can hold.**

Example: Alex from earlier is still not rolling great. They've managed to roll a Messy Critical in a crucial moment where they're holding open a gate while his fellow Hunters escape. Instead of taking the negative effect of the Messy Critical, they ask the GM if they would like two points of Risk instead. The GM agrees and thus gains two points of Risk to spend as they wish.

Spending Metacurrency

The following chart outlines the ways both Drive and Risk can be spent:

Spend	Cost	Effect
Bonus Die	2 Points Cannot Repeat	An actor may roll one additional dice as part of a task they are attempting
Re-roll Damage	1 Point Cannot Repeat	An actor may re-roll as many d4s as they wish in their pool from the current attack
Bonus Damage	1 Point Repeatable	An actor may add +1 damage to a successful attack for each spent point
Obtain Additional Information	1 Point Repeatable	A Player that succeeds at a Task to acquire information or knowledge may ask an additional question of the GM in relation to this Task. The GM must answer truthfully and provide as complete an answer as their story would allow
Create Advantage	2 Points Repeatable	An actor can introduce a positive effect to the current situation, either lowering the Difficulty of a future Task by

		1 (to a minimum of 0) or otherwise making a future Task possible where it was not before.
Create Complication	2 Points Repeatable	An actor can introduce a negative effect to another actor they are in conflict with. This increases the Difficulty of the other actor's next Task by 1 (to a maximum of 6)
Piercing	1 Point Repeatable	The damage of an attack ignores two Armor for each point spent
Avoiding Injury	2 Points Cannot Repeat	An actor avoids suffering a single injury. This may only be used once per scene. If the actor is a Player Character, then they may instead choose to suffer a negative effect or to give the GM two points of Risk.
Quick Action	2 Points Cannot Repeat	An actor can attempt one additional Task during their turn. However, this Task is at a +1 Difficulty compared to what it would normally require (up to a maximum of 6).
Keeping Initiative	2 Points Special	Instead of passing turn order to an enemy, you may pass to another ally. This can only be done once per Round.
Increasing Critical Failure Range	1 to 2 Points Special – Risk Only	The GM can increase the range at which a Messy Critical and/or a Complication can occur. One point changes the range to 11 to 12, while two points changes the range to 10 to 12.
Immediate Scene End	2 Points per Player Character Present Special – Risk Only	The GM can prematurely end a scene or an encounter and leave the situation unresolved. They must describe the manner in which the situation escalates or dissolves in a major way. **This cannot be used to harm or kill PCs directly.**

Players have the option of awarding the GM with Risk in lieu of Drive to pay for any of the costs outlined above.

Social Encounters

At some point in a Hunter's life, they're going to need to deal with other people. Some teams opt to have a dedicated social-specialist among their ranks. Yet even social-specialists cannot completely stop a "bumbling, drunk barbarian" type scenario. Therefore, it is important to codify the mechanics behind any social situation.

The GM is encouraged to weigh the value of **roleplay** over **rollplay** above all else. A player need not roll for every attempt at deceit, only during the particularly important lie. And based upon their roleplay up until that point, the GM may award Advantages or other benefits to that roll.

In general, Social Encounters are made up of Opposing Rolls.

An individual attempting to obscure or otherwise lie must perform a *Persuasion Task* at Difficulty 2. This is opposed by another individual's *People Reading* Task, also at Difficulty 2. The victor of this opposed roll gains a narrative benefit, such as "this NPC believes my story now," or "I know he's lying about something."

An individual attempting to convince or intimidate must perform an Opposed *Persuasion* or *Intimidation* Roll with their target at Difficulty 2. As above, the victor of this opposed roll gains a narrative benefit. Examples include “I like the cut of this person’s jib,” or “Wow, I don’t want to make that guy mad!”

An optional mechanic is to have the GM roll “behind the screen” for both actors in a Social Opposed Roll. That way neither actor can metagame based on the dice results.

Combat

Sometimes words and roleplay won’t stop that angry kraken from trying to eat you.

Rather than put this section after character generation, I’ve placed it here in Chapter 2 so that you can understand what Attributes and Skills are important for Combat. Nothing is more annoying than trying to create a character only to find out that the way you’ve built them doesn’t match the mechanics you had in mind. That said, not every game will touch upon combat. Some will forego it entirely, while others will involve it heavily. It’s important to discuss what a good mix would be for your particular group.

Combat in MATE is fairly simple once you get a feel for it. Like *Vampire: The Masquerade* and similar *World of Darkness* systems, **there is a suggested hard limit of three rounds for all combat encounters**. This is also known as “three and done.” After three rounds, the GM should provide a narrative conclusion to the encounter. The intention behind this rule is to ensure no one encounter takes an entire session, while at the same time providing ways to make combat feel meaningful. If you think it’s worth playing out combat further than three turns then do so!

During your turn, you may take one Move Action and perform one Task.

Distances and Movement

As MATE takes part largely in an aquatic environment, it’s best to abstract distances due to the 3D nature of being underwater. Distances are broken up into zones: Close, Medium, Long, and Extreme.

- **Close** range is the zone the character is in at the present. Moving within Close range is trivial. In instances where distances must be measured, this is anything within 1 meter of the character.
- **Medium** range is the zone adjacent to the character’s current zone. In instances where distances must be measured, this is anything within 10 meters of the character.
- **Long** range is any zone two zones away from the character’s current zone. In instances where distances must be measured, this is anything within 20 meters of the character.
- **Extreme** range is any zone beyond Long range. In instances where distances must be measured, this is anything 21 meters and beyond the character.

The default Move Action is to move anywhere within Medium range. If there are enemies within reach of the character (i.e. they can literally reach out and touch them) then this action cannot be performed. Moving further than Medium range requires a Task at a base Difficulty of 0. This task increases in Difficulty if the terrain of any of the zones being moved through are hindering or hazardous in some way. Failure typically means that the character stops short of their destination (usually at the start of hazardous terrain) and/or suffers the effects of the terrain.

3D Movement

Unless you are specifically within an enclosed, air-filled space or structure, it is assumed that you are surrounded by water. This allows you the ability to move in *all* directions. As seen in the section above, Combat abstracts this for ease of theater of the mind. Few people want to start doing triangle-related calculations in a heated situation! That same concept applies out of combat as well.

In general, every range (Close, Medium, etc.) radiates outward from your character in a spherical fashion. This can be tricky to represent on the tabletop. The easiest way to keep track of elevation is to set up five zones: -2, -1, 0, +1, +2. Each zone is within Medium range of each other, i.e. between -1 and 0 is Medium, and between -1 and +1 is Long. You can expand these bubbles out further as the situation requires.

Falling

Though common for non-aquatic games, falling is a rarity in MATE. There's also the fact that most characters are going to be in cyborg bodies. The simplest way to deal with it is to inflict 1 damage +1 for every meter fallen beyond 5 meters, not reduced by armor. You might also substitute this damage with some form of injury. In the event that a fall would be deadly, the GM is encouraged to give the characters a chance to avoid falling while Succeeding at Cost. This could be represented by them grabbing onto something as they fall or else losing an important item in the process.

Initiative and Turn Order

Unless they are caught unaware, the Players act first in the first Round. Any PC can take their action, after which the turn order is passed to the enemy side. Thus the combat flows between ally and foe. Should they be surprised (or there's confusion on who should act first), GMs should consult the characters' *Reflex* Attributes and allow the one with the higher score to go first.

Common Combat Tasks

The following Tasks can be taken by any actor in combat:

- **Assisting an Ally** – Describe how the character is assisting another, and then roll the relevant Attribute and Skill as a normal assist once that ally performs the given Task.
- **Attacking an Enemy** – See *Making an Attack* below
- **Creating an Advantage** – Similar to the Drive Spend, this allows the character to introduce a positive effect to the current situation, either lowering the Difficulty of a future Task by 1 (to a minimum of 0) or otherwise making a future Task possible where it was not before. This requires a Difficulty 2 Task using an Attribute and Skill combination that the GM deems appropriate for the action being undertaken.
- **Command** – Available to only one character on each side (i.e. 1 for the PCs and their allies, 1 for the enemies), usually with the highest *Leadership* Skill score. The character nominates another character present who may then immediately attempt a single Task. The commanding character assists with a *Leadership* Skill roll. **This may only be used once per Scene**.
- **Defending Another** – The character attempts to shield an ally in some fashion. This requires a *Body* + *Leadership* Task at Difficulty 1. Success increases the Difficulty of all attacks against the nominated ally by +1 until the start of that ally's next turn.

- **Full Defense** – The character ducks behind cover or otherwise readies themselves to dodge incoming attacks. This action means that the Difficulty of all attacks against the character increase by +1 until the start of the character's next turn.
- **Pass** – So long as the character has not moved, this is simply a way to delay the character's turn to act later in the Round after all other actors have had their turn.
- **Prepare** – The character nominates that they are waiting for a specific event or circumstance to occur prior to attempting a Task. Both the event/circumstance and the Task performed must be defined when the character decides to Prepare (i.e. they cannot just say "I prepare" and then wait until they feel like it.) If the nominated situation occurs, the character that prepared temporarily interrupts the current actor's turn to resolve the prepared Task. If the triggering scenario does not occur before the character's next turn then the Prepare is lost.
- **Render Aid** – The character attempts to stabilize an injured character within Close Range. This is typically an *Intelligence* + *First Aid* Task at Difficulty 1, though a GM can require an *Intelligence* + *Cybertech* instead if the injury would warrant such. Success means that the injured character will not die at the end of the scene.
- **Sprint** – A second move action, following the rules as outlined in the section above.
- **Other Tasks –** If you have an idea for a Task not listed here, describe what it is you're trying to do to your GM. They will then decide what a fitting roll would be, should one be required.

Making an Attack

There are four steps to an attack:

1. Choosing a weapon to attack with. This can be a melee weapon, a ranged weapon, or an unarmed attack.
2. Choosing a target for that weapon. Melee and unarmed attacks may only be used against enemies and objects within Close Range. Ranged attacks can be used against enemies and objects that are visible.
3. Deciding whether the attack is intended to be *non-lethal* or *lethal*. **By default, all attacks are considered to be non-lethal**. A Player opting for a lethal attack grants the GM one Risk, and a GM doing the same must spend one Risk.
4. Attempt a Task based on the weapon type:
    a. Melee Attacks use *Dexterity* + *Melee Weapons* or *Dexterity* + *Fisticuffs*. This is an Opposed Roll by the target using either one of two options above or a *Dexterity* + *Dodge* if the target has a Reflex of 8 or higher. The Difficulty for both actors is 1. If the target wins the Opposed Roll and they did not roll Dodge, then they are considered to have made a successful Attack instead. If they did roll Dodge, then mechanically nothing further happens for this attack.
    b. Ranged Attacks use *Reflex* + *Ranged Weapons*. If the target has a Reflex of 8 or higher, then they may perform an Opposed Roll at Difficulty 2 of *Dexterity* + *Dodge*. Otherwise, the attacker need only succeed at a Task with a Difficulty set by the range. Close and Medium Range are at Difficulty 2. Long range is at Difficulty 3. Extreme range is at Difficulty 4+.

Aiming for a specific part on a body or an object confers a +1 Difficulty (up to a Maximum of 6) for the tradeoff of +1d4 damage OR an automatic Advantage (such as disarming an opponent). Success on an Attack means that the attacker inflicts damage as described below.

Damage, Injury, and Recovery

Attacks and other hazards have a **damage rating**, which is the number of d4s to roll. **Recommended damage ratings can be found in Chapter 4**. Once rolled, the sum of the d4s is then reduced by any armor the character might have. The total result is then applied against the character's HP. If a character takes 6 or more damage in a single attack, or if they would take more damage than their current HP, then they are considered to have suffered an *Injury*.

An injured character is incapacitated, meaning they cannot move or attempt any Tasks for the remainder of the scene. If a character would suffer two injuries at once (i.e. 6+ damage and out of HP), then resolve them one at a time.

If a character is already injured by a non-lethal attack, then another injury of any kind turns that into a lethal injury instead. If a character is already injured by a lethal attack, then another injury kills the character instantly. **However, this is not the end for the character if they are currently connected to Seanet.** They have only lost their current body and must download themselves into a new one. This is why adventuring into the depths is so dangerous – The deeper you go, the less stable your connection to Seanet is!

Further good news is that an injured character cannot be targeted by any further attacks unless the attacker adds one to Risk (or spends one Risk in the case of NPCs). That said, an enemy can still interact with them in other ways such as carrying or capturing them.

Injury and Healing

If no injuries were taken, a character automatically recovers all their HP at the start of the next scene.

If only suffering from a non-lethal injury, then the character recovers at the start of the next scene automatically. If they are suffering a lethal injury, though, they will die at the end of the current scene unless they receive First Aid. The GM is encouraged not to end scenes before characters have had a chance to try their hand at Rendering Aid. Receiving such aid means they are still injured and require further action to heal, but that they are no longer in immediate danger of death.

Healing such an injury requires treatment. This cannot occur during combat. It involves an *Intelligence* + *First Aid* (or *Cybertech* at the GM's discretion) at a base Difficulty of 2. Factors such as the available tools on hand, what supplies are present, where the treatment is being performed, and the number of injuries taken thus far should all factor into whether that Difficulty is increased or not.

Hacking

Certain special frames have the ability to hack other cyborgs. Such an action acts much like a ranged attack as detailed above, with a few important changes. For starters, hacking requires an *Intelligence* + *Cybertech* Task. The Difficulty is set by the range. Close and Medium Range are at Difficulty 3, Long range is at Difficulty 4, and Extreme range is at Difficulty 5+. A successful hack does not deal any damage directly. Instead, the hacker may inflict a complication on their target. This complication may not directly cause any damage to the target. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Overriding the target's aiming subroutines such that they target an ally instead of an enemy with their next attack
- Causing the target's weapon to jam or otherwise become unusable
- Temporarily blinding the target (+1 Difficulty to all Tasks involving sight) by flooding their ocular inputs with white noise
- Interrupting the target's pneumatic flow regulator (+1 Difficulty to all DEX Tasks)
- Feeding the target's ocular inputs and/or audio receptors with a false image/sound that distracts them for a Round

An affected target will not self-harm or follow any directive that would result in such. Hacking is also not mind-control in the sense that the hacker cannot directly control what the target does next. A target knows when someone has tried to hack them, be it successful or not. Discerning the hacker from a crowd takes a *Charisma + People Reading* Task at Difficulty 3. This means that trying to hack someone during a Social Encounter is an extremely risky action that can backfire very easily. The only way to defend completely against a hack attempt is to enter what is known as *agnostic mode*. In such a mode, all wireless communication is turned off, meaning that the target cannot receive any inputs other than what their natural senses provide. This includes connection to Seanet and any team-based channels.

Exploration Mechanics

A large portion of the game is in dealing with the dangers that come with deep sea diving. This section outlines the mechanics for a dive as they pertain to matters such as Depth Pressure and Light.

Depth Pressure

Pressure is a major concern for several reasons. The first is that it increases and becomes more hazardous the deeper you go. Every 10 or so meters in depth roughly equates to 1 atmosphere (atm) of pressure, or about 15 pounds per square inch (psi). That means that by the time you get down to a kilometer you're dealing with around 100 times the pressure at sea level!

However, it's not the "mechanical" pressure that's deadly. Rather, it's the toxicity and unwanted biochemical effects of breathing gasses that's the main problem. Normal Humans (i.e. non-cyborgs) can generally dive anywhere between 27 to 60 meters before the pressure causes nitrogen toxicity. Replacing Nitrogen with Helium allows them to get up to 100 meters. The greatest depth reachable by a baseline human (about 700 meters) requires a special mixture of Hydrogen-Oxygen-Helium.

The good news is that the average aquatic cyborg frame can easily handle the gas exchange issues up to a depth of 2 kilometers. Past that requires careful regulation of internal processes. **This is represented mechanically by requiring a single d12 roll against your Body Attribute (BOD, See Chapter 3) every thirty minutes of narrative or otherwise structured time.** So long as you succeed on the roll, you suffer no ill effects. However, when you start to fail them, you begin to suffer the following penalties:

Number of Failures	Effect on a Fail
0	+1 Penalty to future REF dice rolls (i.e. a roll of 9 would become a 10)
1	+1 Penalty to future REF and INT dice rolls
2	+1 Difficulty to INT and REF Tasks
3	1d4 Damage unmitigated by any means every thirty minutes until the return to a safer depth.
4	Damage per thirty minutes increases by +1d4 (Total of 2d4)

5	Partial Systems Failure. The character is considered incapacitated (unable to make rolls) with a non-lethal injury.
6	Total Systems Failure. The character is considered lethally injured and will die unless they are returned to a safe depth immediately

Returning to a safe depth (or some form of safely-pressurized environment) is the quickest way to clear any penalties occurred from failing your Pressure check. It's not as simple as just swimming towards the surface, though! If you swim upwards too quickly then you'll experience Decompression Sickness. Even in a cyborg frame! This is the true killer of over-eager Hunters seeking the depths. At its worst, Decompression Sickness can cause symptoms such as seizures, amnesia, intense pain, hearing loss, unconsciousness, and even death. Thus, it's extremely important that you make Decompression Stops as you ascend. **Failure to do so causes unmitigable damage equal to 1d4 per 100 meters you ascend.** Each Stop takes approximately 15 minutes, during which time you must maintain your current depth and allow your systems to adjust.

An especially savvy Player might point out that there's nothing stopping their character from discarding their current cyborg frame and leaving it in the depths to get around this process. The problem there is that **Seanet only penetrates 1.5 kilometers into the ocean**. Past that requires setting up specialized relay beacons. It's worth noting that one immediately knows when they've been cut off from Seanet.

The last tidbit of knowledge to keep in mind is that most "beginner dives" only go as far into the depths as Seanet does. "Medium dives" go anywhere between 1.5 to 3 kilometers, and "Hard dives" anywhere between 3 to 4 kilometers. Only the bravest, well-equipped, and perhaps fool-hardy Hunters go past the 4-kilometer mark.

Light

A large amount of useable sunlight only penetrates about 200 meters into the ocean. Some light makes it down to 1,000 meters, but no further. This 200 to 1000 meter band is commonly referred to as "The Twilight Zone." Past 1000 meters the ocean is pitch dark and requires illumination and/or a means to see outside the visible spectrum (such as ultraviolet or X-rays). The effectiveness of thermal imaging (infrared) is significantly reduced the deeper you go. Most aquatic cyborg frames are equipped with basic ultraviolet imaging capabilities that allow you to see up to 30 meters away.

Communication

Basic cyborg frames have the ability to wirelessly communicate with any other frame within 20 meters. At such distances, only text communication is possible. Higher fidelity transmissions are only possible within 15 meters. That said, sound travels very easily underwater. If you don't mind being overheard, it's possible to have a normal conversation at long distances. Most Hunter teams, therefore, rely on hand signals and other non-verbal means of communication during a dive so as not to give their positions away. Only those Hunters with deep pockets (or who know the right person) have access to quantum communication. Quantum communication allows for full communication (audio, visual, etc.) over an essentially-limitless distance.

Chapter 3: Character Creation

Time to get your feet wet!

Designing your character from the ground up can be an important element in any TTRPG. But before we can start talking about generation proper, you need to understand what the Attributes, Skills, and Misc. Stats are for a character.

Attributes

All Attributes range in value from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 10. As outlined in Chapter 2, they define how many d12s you get to roll for a given Task. There are two types of Attributes: Non-Derived and Derived.

Non-Derived Attributes

These attributes are decided at character creation. They can be enhanced by a cyborg body but are not replaced when switching types of bodies.

- **Reflex (REF)** – Response time and coordination.
- **Intelligence (INT)** – How bright you are, including cleverness, awareness, perception, and ability to learn.
- **Charisma (CHA)** – Ability to relate to and care for others

Derived Attributes

These attributes are decided by the type of cyborg body your consciousness inhabits. Switching types of bodies replaces these attributes with those of the new body.

- **Strength (STR)** – How strong you are
- **Body (BOD)** – Size, toughness, and ability to stay alive.
- **Dexterity (DEX)** – Overall physical competence in relation to athletic activities.

Skills

Like Attributes, all Skills range in value from a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 10. As outlined in Chapter 2, they define the target number you are trying to roll under for a given Task. Skills are arranged into groups based on a common theme.

Tech Skills

- **Ancient Tech** – The study and operation of any technology from before The Melting.
- **Cybertech** – The study and operation of contemporary technology such as cyborg bodies, advanced equipment, and so forth.
- **First Aid** – The knowledge of and the experience in treating wounds and injuries.

Weapon Skills

- **Fisticuffs** – The use of one's natural weapons (often fists) in melee.
- **Melee Weapons** – The use of any weapon in melee, improvised or otherwise.
- **Ranged Weapons** – The use of any weapon at range, improvised or otherwise.

Physical Skills

- **Athletics** – A broad skill that covers everything from swimming, lifting heavy objects, throwing, and other contests of endurance and strength.

- **Dodge** – The art of moving or otherwise manipulating one's body out of the way of hazards and attacks
- **Stealth** – The art of hiding in the shadows, moving silently, or otherwise avoiding detection

Social Skills

- **Intimidation** – Application of force (even verbal) to get information or a desired outcome from someone
- **Leadership** – The use of one's presence to lead, inspire, and devise group tactics.
- **People Reading** – A.k.a. The proverbial "Insight Check." How good someone is at judging whether someone is telling the truth
- **Persuasion** – How good one is at influencing or convincing other characters.

Awareness Skills

- **Perception** – One's skill at observation and spotting hidden things
- **Tracking** – The ability to follow a trail by observing the environment
- **Sleight of Hand** – How skilled one is at finding an opening in which to steal something, as well as how well they can disarm traps without setting them off

Misc. Stats

- **Armor** – A flat amount of damage reduction from attacks/hazards. Typically tied to the body you're using.
- **HP** – How much damage you can withstand. Equal to BOD x 3

With this knowledge in hand, we can finally address the process of character creation.

Step 1: Deciding on a Concept

Character creation is usually best undertaken with a specific character in mind. Will you be a social-oriented character, meant to smooth-talk your way through trouble? Or maybe you'll be combat-focused: A wall between danger and your party? Perhaps even a Jack of All Trades, prepared for any and all scenarios? What the case may be, it's good to think about your intention as you go through character creation.

Step 2: Priority Generation

MATE differs from traditional TTRPG character creation (such as D&D) in that no dice are required for the process. Instead, it requires you to decide what you value and define that in terms of Priority. There are three Priorities: A, B, and C. You may only use each Priority once, meaning that if you took Priority A to get access to a desired frame, you would then have the choose between Priorities B and C for your Attribute and Skill Points.

The Point value listed for Non-Derived Attributes is how many total points you can add to REF, INT, and CHA. All three Attributes start at a value of 1, meaning it takes 9 points to max an Attribute out. For example, if you took Priority A and maxed out CHA to be a 10, then you would have nine more points to split between REF and INT, each of which would start at 1.

Skill Points are a little trickier. Like Non-Derived Attributes, all Skills start at a value of 1. The array of numbers in the chart below are then applied once per Skill group. For example, Priority A's array of 8, 7, 6, 4, 2 means that one Skill group (Tech, Social, etc.) can add eight points in total across the Skills in that

group, another group can add seven points, and so forth. This allows you to make characters that excel in certain things, but not to the point where they are a so-called “one trick pony.”

Priority	Available Frames	Non-Derived Attribute Points	Skill Points
A	OTOHIME, NEREID, KRAKEN, CANCER, MERSHARK, SCYLLA, MERMAID	18	8, 7, 6, 4, 2
B	MERSHARK, SCYLLA, MERMAID	14	6, 5, 5, 3, 2
C	MERMAID only	10	4, 3, 3, 3, 2

Each of the frames has its own separate page that follows this one. You can freely swap between frames you have access to during downtime between dives. This includes printing off a frame should it be required. During dives, however, you can only do so if you have access to a 3D printer and a connection to Seanet. It takes approximately one hour to properly print a frame.

Unfortunately, the less-than-perfect plasticity of neural pathways and the difficulty of operating non-human forms often causes mental blocks and difficulty adapting. Thus, people with more advanced frames can, at least initially, seem less intelligent or less skilled compared to others.

MERMAID

Ningyo Industries

STR	BOD	DEX	ARMOR
5	5	5	0

The MERMAID frame developed by *Ningyo Industries* is the most ubiquitous cyborg frame. It sports the typical Human upper-half and Fish lower-half. It also has the greatest number of publicly-available customizations available to it: Everything from cosmetics to imbedded tools/weapons. The average citizen will live their entire life in such a frame.

MERSHARK

Ningyo Industries

STR	BOD	DEX	ARMOR
7	6	3	1

Ningyo Industries' goal behind the MERSHARK frame was to create an upgraded version of the MERMAID frame for heavy lifting and other instances where strength and endurance were required. Users enjoy the frame's ability to both take a punch and dish one out. This frame is most commonly seen among Hunters and Tube-Men alike.

SCYLLA

Hecate Productions

STR	BOD	DEX	ARMOR
5	6	7	1

Bonuses:
Can Walk on Land
Multiple Limbs (Tentacles)

The SCYLLA frame by *Hecate Productions* is favored by "White-collar" technicians and other laborers where having multiple grasping limbs is useful. Most of Terra's scientific and engineering community utilizes this frame. It still sees use by Hunters, however, in addition to well-to-do Tube-Men.

OTOHIME

Suvannamaccha Ltd.

STR	BOD	DEX	ARMOR
3	5	5	1

Bonuses:
+1 to CHA
+1 to Leadership
+1 to Persuasion
Can Hack

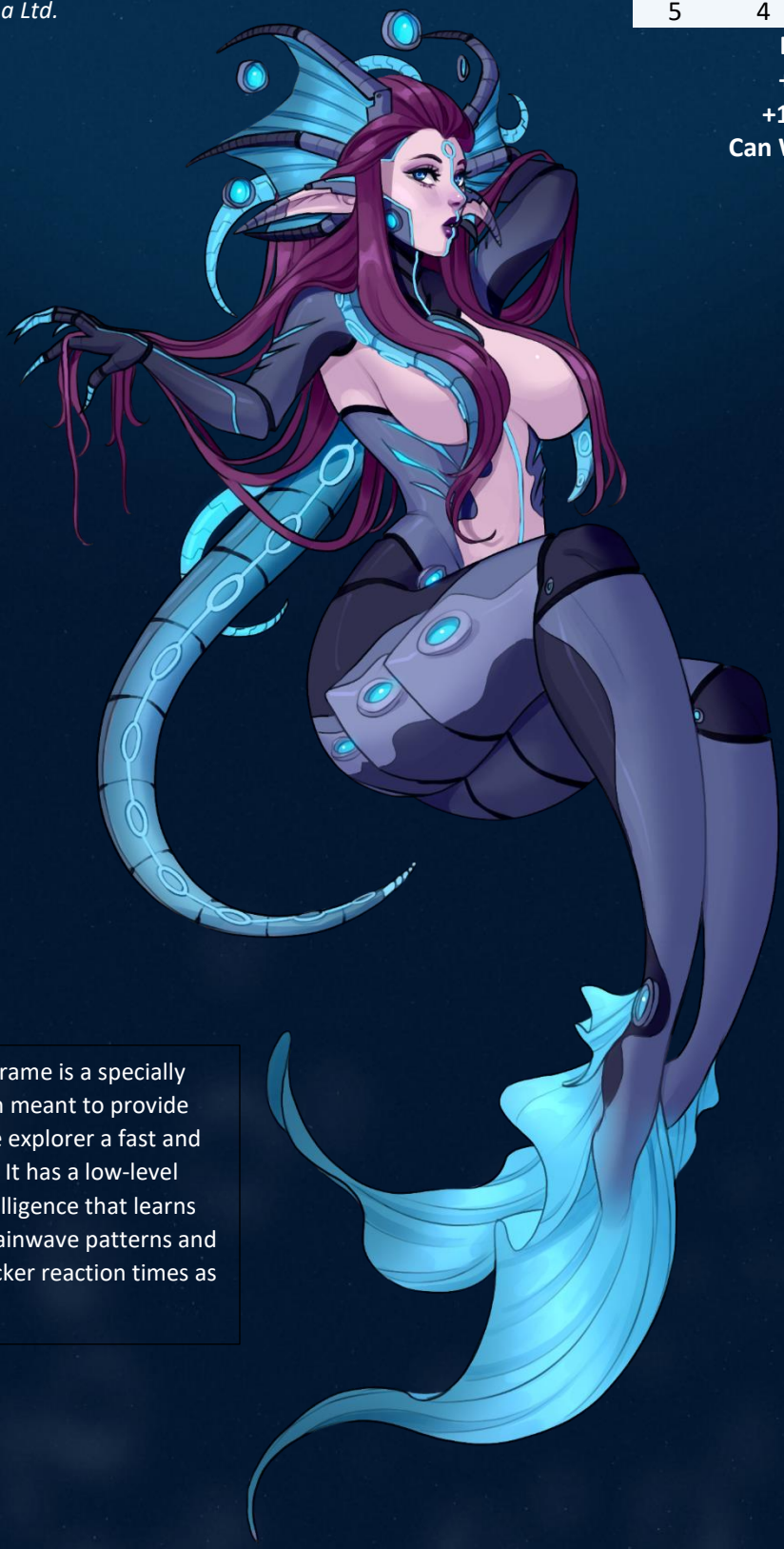
The OTOHIME frame is the go-to for any socialite or nouveau riche looking to flaunt their status. It is rumored that this frame's black box contains override codes for all other frames, and that this is why one feels inspired by the mere presence of an OTOHIME.

NEREID

Suvannamaccha Ltd.

STR	BOD	DEX	ARMOR
5	4	8	0

Bonuses:
+1 to REF
+1 to Dodge
Can Walk on Land



The NEREID frame is a specially tooled design meant to provide the would-be explorer a fast and nimble body. It has a low-level Machine Intelligence that learns the user's brainwave patterns and provides quicker reaction times as a result.

KRAKEN

Hecate Productions

STR	BOD	DEX	ARMOR
6	6	7	1

Bonuses:
+1 to INT
+1 to Stealth
+1 to Sleight of Hand
Can Walk on Land
Multiple Limbs (Tentacles)

The KRAKEN frame is an upgraded version of the SCYLLA model. It has been designed with greater tactile sensors and finer motor movement. This makes it an excellent choice for adventurers who find themselves faced with traps or other situations requiring precise physical manipulation.

CANCER

Brachyura Works

STR	BOD	DEX	ARMOR
8	8	2	3

Bonuses:
+1 to Athletics
+1 to Intimidation
Special Weapon (See Below)
Can Walk on Land
Multiple Limbs (Claws)

Large and bulky, the CANCER frame is the end all when it comes to strength and survivability. The tradeoff is a reduced speed of movement compared to all other frames. It sees the most use among Trenchers and Hunters that work in the depths beyond the Twilight Zone.

Special Weapon (CLAWS Mk II): This frame has an integrated weapon that cannot be removed without removing the frame's main two pincer claws. This weapon acts both as a 2d4 damaging melee weapon and as a 1d4 damaging ranged harpoon weapon (See Chapter 4).

Step 3: Talent Choice

Talents are additional benefits that represent areas of expertise, advantages of their upbringing or approach to situations, and other potent abilities. These are usually some form of a bonus, such as extra dice, re-rolls, and bonus Drive. **MATE characters all start with one Talent.** They must meet the prerequisites for the Talent to take it. Otherwise, they may choose freely.

All Eyes on Me

Prerequisite: Intimidation 5+

During conflict, be it social or actual combat, you may use your force of personality to nominate yourself as the biggest threat. All enemy NPCs must target you with their attacks (verbal or otherwise) else suffer a +1 increase in their Task Difficulty (up to a Maximum of 6). In timed conflict, this effect takes an action to activate and lasts until the start of your next turn. It can be used a total of three (3) times per scene.

Armored

Prerequisite: None

You gain +1 Armor, up to a Maximum of 4.

Deep Sea Veteran

Prerequisite: None

You have experience with and special modifications for deep sea diving. This effectively doubles the time between your Pressure Rolls and cuts the amount of time you need to spend on decompression in half.

Driven

Prerequisite: None

Choose one Attribute when you pick this Talent. Whenever you attempt a Task with this Attribute, and you spend Drive in the process, you may re-roll a single 1d12 from your pool. You may not select this Talent for any Attribute for which you already have the Risktaker Talent. You may also not select either this Talent or Risktaker more than twice combined (i.e. Maximum of 2 Driven, 1 Driven and 1 Risktaker, or 2 Risktaker)

Field Surgeon

Prerequisite: Cybertech 5+ OR First Aid 5+

Whenever you would perform First Aid, you ignore any increase in Difficulty due to the lack of proper tools or equipment.

I Meant to do That!

Prerequisite: Stealth 5+ OR Sleight of Hand 5+

Whenever you fail a Task to disarm a trap or to avoid detection, you may opt to Succeed at Cost instead.

Intense Scrutiny

Prerequisite: People Reading 5+

All other Actors (including allies and other PCs) suffer a +2 increase in Difficulty to any Tasks meant to deceive or otherwise mislead you.

Mentor

Prerequisite: Leadership 5+

Whenever you assist another character using Leadership, the character being assisted can re-roll one d12.

On the Lookout

Prerequisite: Perception 5+

You reduce the Difficulty of all Tasks to detect danger or hidden foes by 1.

Precise Dodging

Prerequisite: Dodge 5+

Whenever you would roll a Task involving Dodge, you may re-roll one d12 so long as you provide a narrative reason for such that fits the current situation. I.e. You cannot simply say “I dodge better.”

Rapid Study

Prerequisite: Ancient Tech 5+ OR Cybertech 5+

Whenever you are working with a piece of technology you are unfamiliar with, you ignore any increase in Difficulty due to your unfamiliarity.

Risktaker
Prerequisite: None
Choose one Attribute when you pick this Talent. Whenever you attempt a Task with this Attribute, and you spend Risk in the process, you may re-roll a single 1d12 from your pool. You may not select this Talent for any Attribute for which you already have the Driven Talent. You may also not select either this Talent or Driven more than twice combined (i.e. Maximum of 2 Risktaker, 1 Risktaker and 1 Driven, or 2 Driven)

Silver Tongue
Prerequisite: Persuasion 5+
Whenever you succeed at a Persuasion roll, you may Create an Advantage for only 1 Drive instead of the usual 2.

Skilled Swimmer
Prerequisite: Athletics 4+
You may take the Sprint action during combat once per Round for free. In situations where distances are measured, your speed is considered to be double that of other Actors (i.e. instead of a 10m move you end up going 20m)

Vicious Fists
Prerequisite: Fisticuffs 5+
Your unarmed attacks gain +1d4 damage. This increase also applies to any natural weapons that a cyborg frame provides.

Step 4: Keystones

A Keystone represents an ideal, goal, or belief that your character possesses that defines who they are as an individual. They can be both positive and negative. Keystones are important for a very big reason: **If you are able to apply a Keystone to one of your Task rolls, then you may choose to do one of the following once per session:**

1. **(Before Roll)** Start with two free successes that add to whatever successes are rolled
2. **(After Roll)** Re-roll as many dice from *your* pool as you wish

Assisting Characters may not use Keystones for their rolls.

You may regain the use of this mechanic for a session in one of two ways:

1. The GM offers to restore your use at the cost of you acting on a Keystone in negative way. GMs are encouraged not to overuse this option, and instead save it for potentially heated/tense situations.
2. You challenge a Keystone, meaning you act contrary to it. If you opt for this then you must cross out the Keystone and replace it with another at the end of the session. *You cannot perform this action if you have already crossed out a Keystone this session.*

All characters start with three Keystones. Examples include, but are not limited to: *I never leave someone behind, The pursuit of Truth above all else, Stubborn to a Fault, I must be an example to others, Haunted by the Past, Death before Dishonor, Nothing is beyond repair, Every Problem has a Solution, Who dares Wins, I avoid the limelight for a good reason, Looking for a shot at redemption, Never Trust a Trencher*

Step 5: Finishing Touches

Now that you have the mechanical basics for your character, it's time to decide on what your character's backstory is like. There is no right or wrong way to develop a backstory. Some will prefer to detail

meticulously, while others will start with a basic premise and discover the character during play. This is also where Session 0 and/or discussion with your group can lead to interpersonal connections between characters, both for good and bad. Whatever the case may be, here are some questions to get you thinking:

- From which of the Seven (See Chapter 5) do they come from?
- Why did your character decide to become a Hunter?
- How long have they been a Hunter?
- What is their end goal should they strike it rich?
- Why have they opted for their specific cyborg frame?
- Is there a specific story behind their talent choice?
- What is the most valuable item they possess?
- What has been the most valuable item/knowledge they have found in the depths?
- What's the easiest way to earn/break their trust?
- How much importance do they put on teamwork and coordination?
- What's the one thing they wish to accomplish beyond all else?

Character Advancement

An ever-important topic in TTRPGs, Character Advancement is the means by which your character improves over time. Unlike in D&D, where you would normally have to keep track of experience points per level, MATE operates on a much looser basis. Specifically, it uses what is commonly referred to in TTRPGs as "Milestone advancement." **In essence, your GM should be giving you an advancement after every major excursion into the depths (a.k.a. A "Dive").** What qualifies as a Dive is dependent on your group. Some parties may complete one in a single session. Others might take longer. GMs in the latter category should consider advancement after major plot points and/or roughly every three to four sessions. A good metric there is an advancement every 10 or so hours of play.

What you actually get with an Advancement

You may pick one of the following options when you have earned an Advancement:

- Gain three points to spread among your skills as you see fit
- Gain an additional Talent
- Increase a single, non-derived Attribute by 1 (Up to a Maximum of 10)
- Increase a single, derived Attribute by 1* (See below) (Up to a Maximum of 10)
- Save the Advancement

If you opt to increase a derived Attribute by 1, then that modification is considered to be standard across all frames of that type. For example, that means if you increase the CANCER's DEX then both your current and all future CANCER frames you use have that same increase. **A frame can only be enhanced twice in this way**.

The last option is worth talking about further so as to reduce confusion. A saved Advancement can be used in the same way as Keystone without requiring the character to have a related Keystone**. This uses up the Advancement.** The other major use for saved Advancements is to purchase access to a "higher-tier" Cyborg frame. Each purchase of a new tier costs two saved Advancements. Those characters that

chose Priorities B or C during character generation gain access to the frames one Priority above them (i.e. Priority C can now pick Priority B, and Priority B pick Priority A).

For those characters that opted to select Priority A frame during character generation (or ones that have bought their way to it), there are several special frames that are not available during either generation or normal play: *LEVIATHAN*, *MINDFLAYER*, and *ANGLERFISH*. These frames are extremely rare, only available to notable Hunters who have good connections and/or have come across them by chance. **You should discuss with your GM whether transitioning into one of these special frames makes sense both for your character and for the story before taking this advancement.**

Stats for the LEVIATHAN, MINDFLAYER, and ANGLERFISH can be found on the proceeding pages.

LEVIATHAN

Brachyura Works

STR	BOD	DEX	ARMOR
9	8	4	3

Bonuses:
+1d4 to all Damage
+2 to Intimidation
-1 to REF
Double Operational Depth
(Checks at 3+ km)
Can Walk on Land

The LEVIATHAN frame is so rare that public sightings (outside of Trencher encampments) often go hand in hand with reports of a “Godzilla-like creature” going on a rampage. Said “rampage” is usually something as benign as simply going into town. The few records from users of this frame indicate that their response times degrade the longer they remain in the frame.

MINDFLAYER

ERROR: MANUFACTURER NOT FOUND

STR	BOD	DEX	ARMOR
3	6	8	1

Bonuses:
+2 to CHA
+2 to Persuasion
+2 to Leadership
-1 to INT
Can Walk on Land
Can Hack

The MINDFLAYER frame is something of an enigma. It combines pre-Melting technology with the standard suite of upgrades found on more "socially-focused" frames like the OTOHIME. It does so in a manner that is not fully understood by current science.

Users of this frame have notably commented that there seemed to be a gnawing voice in the back of their head at all times, whispering words of madness. Those that listened to this voice eventually went on to try and preach the words of [ERROR: DATA EXPUNGED – REASON: COGNITOHAZARD LEVEL 2] This has led many to believe that this frame is something to be classified and otherwise sealed away.

IT IS TOO LATE. THE WORDS OF THE DEEP ONES WILL SPREAD. PRAISE TO HER NAME.[1]

[1] How did this get there? Data Stream must be getting corrupted somehow.

ANGLERFISH

Brachyura Works

Variant "-A"

STR	BOD	DEX	ARMOR
4	5	9	1

Bonuses:
-1 Difficulty on all Dodge Tasks
+2 to Athletics
-1 to CHA

Variant "-B"

STR	BOD	DEX	ARMOR
4	9	4	3

Bonuses:
+2 to Intimidation
+2 to Athletics
-2 to CHA

The ANGLERFISH frame is one of the few frames that exhibits major dimorphism. The "-A" variant is notably smaller than the "-B" variant, favoring speed and reflexes over the latter's larger size and greater resistances. Both variants are an eye-sore, or at least those that use this frame tend to not care about their social appearance.

AND WHY SHOULD THEY? SOCIAL CONNECTIONS ARE FLEETING. ONLY SHE IS ETERNAL[2]

[2] There it is again. Whatever is going on isn't good. I'll try starting a new section and see if it persists.

Chapter 4: The Gamemaster

This section contains nuggets of guidance to help get a game going.

The Probability Chart

	TN 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1d12	0.083 8.33% SD .28	.17 16.67%S D .37	0.25 25% SD .43	0.33 33.33% SD .47	0.42 41.67% SD .49	0.5 50% SD .5	0.58 58.3% SD .49	.67 66.67% SD .47	0.75 75% SD .43	0.83 83.33% SD .37
2d12	.17 15.97% SD .39	.33 30.5%S D .53	0.5 43.75% SD .61	0.67 55.56% SD .67	.83 65.97% SD .7	1 75% SD .71	1.17 82.64% SD .7	1.33 88.89% SD .67	1.5 93.75% SD .61	1.67 97.22% SD .53
3d12	0.25 22.97% SD .48	.5 42.13% SD . 65	.75 57.8% SD .75	1 70.37% SD .82	1.25 80.15% SD .85	1.5 87.5% SD .87	1.75 92.77 SD . 85	2 96.3% SD .82	2.25 98.44% SD .75	2.5 99.54% SD /65
4d12	0.33 29.39% SD .55	.67 51.77% SD .75	1 68.36% SD .87	1.33 80.25% SD .94	1.67 88.42% SD .99	2 93.75% SD 1	2.33 96.9% SD .99	2.67 98.77% SD .94	3 99.61% SD .87	3.33 ~99.99% SD .75
5d12	0.42 35.29% SD .62	.83 59.81% SD .83	1.25 76.27% SD ..97	1.67 86.83% SD 1.05	2.083 93.25% SD 1.1	2.5 96.88% SD 1.12	2.92 98.74% SD 1.1	3.33 99.59% SD 1.05	3.75 99.9% SD .97	4.17 ~99.99% SD .83
6d12	0.5 40.76% SD .68	1 66.51% SD .91	1.5 82.2% SD 1.06	2 91.22% SD 1.15	2.5 96.06% SD 1.21	3 98.44% SD 1.22	3.5 99.48% SD 1.21	4 99.86% SD 1.15	4.5 99.98% SD 1.06	5 ~99.99% SD .91
7d12	0.58 45.61% SD .73	1.17 72.09%S D .99	1.75 86.65% SD .1.15	2.33 94.15% SD 1.25	2.92 97.7% SD 1.3	3.5 99.22% 1.32	4.083 99.78% SD 1.3	4.67 99.95% SD 1.25	5.25 ~99.99% SD 1.15	5.83 ~99.99% SD .99
8d12	0.67 50.15% SD .78	1.33 76.74% SD 1.05	2 89.99% SD .1.22	2.67 96.10% SD 1.33	3.33 98.66% SD 1.39	4 99.61% SD 1.41	4.67 99.91% SD 1.39	5.33 99.98% SD 1.33	6 ~99.99% SD 1.22	6.67 ~99.99% SD 1.05
9d12	0.75 54.3% SD .83	1.5	2.25	3	3.78	4.5	5.25	6 ~99.99%	6.75 ~99.99%	7.5 ~99.99%
10d12	0.83	1.67	2.5	3.33	4.16	5	5.83	6.67 ~99.99%	7.5 ~99.99%	8.33 ~99.99%

The above chart shows Pool size vs TN, showing average successes, chance of at least once success, and standard deviation. It's best to consult this chart when judging how difficult to make a Task when you're starting out so that you don't make things overly difficult on your players. Even then, this table is only a guideline – not a rule!

Underwater Hazards

There's all manner of hazards in the deep beyond the lack of light and the dangers of pressure. This is a smattering of what might be encountered during a dive. It is by no means comprehensive, meaning you can come up with your own hazards following the spirit of these examples.

Dead Zones

Dead Zones are low-oxygen (hypoxic) areas in the ocean. Without proper oxygen, most marine life in bottom and near-bottom waters is unable to survive. These zones are usually created by an increase of nutrients in the water, which in turn causes a rapid increase in the algae population. This phenomenon, also known as an algal bloom, affects the entire ecosystem. Not only does it block sunlight from reaching other organisms, shaking up the food web in the process, but it also leads to bacterial degradation that consumes the oxygen in the water when the algae die.

The good news is that the man-made causes for algal blooms are extremely limited post-Melting. Pre-Melting, the overuse of fertilizers, sewage runoff, and urban development were all major contributors to the formation of dead zones. That does not mean that natural causes still do not create their own dead zones,

however. There are still seasonal dead zones that occur in the warm months.

Mechanically, dead zones are represented by halving the time between pressure checks as the Hunter's cyborg frame tries to cope with a reduced oxygen exchange with the surrounding water. GMs should also limit the amount of wild marine life that is found in the areas. Specially, only jellyfish and similar creatures can survive in such an environment. At least, *as far as we know*.

Thermal Vents

Hydrothermal vents are fissures on the seafloor that emit geothermally-heated, chemical-rich water. They are typically found along seafloor mountain systems formed by plate tectonics. These vents form crucial habitats for deep-sea organisms, to the point where the organism density around them is several orders of magnitude higher than the surrounding sea floor. Entire food chains form, and among the chain are exotic species seen nowhere else on the planet. This includes microorganisms that can be traced back to have lived over 4 billion years ago, not long after Earth itself formed.

The danger of thermal vents comes with their temperature. The water emerging from the vents can range in temperature from 60 °C up to 464 °C. At higher temperatures, the water surrounding a vent can exist in a supercritical state. This means that it can act both as a gas and as a liquid. Unprepared Hunters can be effectively flash-burned and left stunned by even brief exposure if they get too close. Only Trenchers, with their inhuman frames, are bold enough to actually form their own communities around such vents. And they're rewarded for their courage: Many thermal vents are rich in cobalt, gold, copper, and rare earth metals essential in the creation of electronic components.

Mechanically, thermal vents are only a problem if a Hunter is directly exposed to the water near the actual vent opening. In such an event, they would take 2d4 damage from initial contact and an additional 2d4 for every two rounds that the contact continues.

Fire Coral

It's often the most colorful things in nature that are the most venomous. Fire coral is no exception. The mustard-yellow coral might look harmless, yet even the tiniest scratch can cause blisters that last weeks. This particular type of coral is found in abundance just under the surface of shallow waters, meaning that Land-Dwellers, Floaters, and Tube-Men are especially affected by it.

Mega-Fauna

One side effect of the Melting was that the marine life had to adapt to new sea conditions. For predators, this meant either becoming more streamlined or ballooning in size. It's not an exaggeration to say that creatures such as the Megalodon have returned to the seas. Yet it's not just the "go-to" predators that changed. Take the Bobbit Worm, for example. Its diameter increased tenfold, and its length grew to 30 meters. It is one of the apex predators of the sea floor, and damn hard to kill entirely. There's a reason why it's known as "the Hell Worm" to most Hunters!

Fish

Yes, you read that correctly. "Regular" fish can be just as deadly to a Hunter as anything else. For example, barracudas are attracted by glinting surfaces and can sever an artery or tendon with their bite. Trigger fish can take chunks out of unarmored cyborg frames if their nests are disturbed. Needlefish rush towards bright lights at night and can penetrate the chest. Giant groupers can stun a Hunter in a head-on collision, and/or hold them in their mouth until fought off. The list goes on. It's not just sharks and the like that can harm you!

Caves

Cave diving is one of the most challenging kinds of diving or caving even Post-Detachment. This is because a diver cannot swim vertically to the surface in an emergency. Instead, they must swim the entire way back out of the cave. Navigation through a cave system is its own difficulty. Light is typically just that which is produced by a diver's implements. Visibility can vary from near limitless to absolutely non-existent in an instant, especially if the cave contains some form of sediment that can be stirred up from a diver's motions. Some caves also have strong water currents that vary from tunnel to tunnel. One tunnel might have an out-flowing current, while another is in-flowing. And if all that wasn't bad enough, Seanet typically does not reach beyond 100 meters into a cave. That means that getting trapped is almost certainly a death sentence.

There are several ways to manage the threats presented by cave diving. The first (and perhaps most important) is by going through training to develop confidence, motor skills, and reflexes to remain calm and apply the appropriate procedures. It is assumed that a starting Hunter Player Character has received basic training and at least some form of real-world experience. The second is by running a continuous guide line that leads back up to open water, taking care to run the line in such a way that it maintains tension and does not go through spaces that a diver cannot. The third is by following the "rule of thirds." Tautologies aside, this refers to having proper breathing gas management. While most frames don't need external gas supplies, cave divers should always carry enough breathable gas such that one third is used for ingress, one third for egress, and the last one third for emergencies.

Wrecks and Underwater Facilities

Similar to Caves, these types of hazards are not something to be trifled with. In addition to those hazards presented by caves, a diver must also worry about the stability of the wreck/facility they are exploring. Even something as light as the flip of a tailfin can cause weight to shift and possibly lead to collapse in unstable wrecks. There's also the danger of explosive decompression: If a section of the area being explored has kept a watertight seal, then opening it carelessly will lead to a violent blast as the air rushes out.

When it comes to underwater facilities, there's no telling what hidden and unforeseen dangers lie within. For example, automated doors might seem benign until they're sealed shut behind a Hunter team. And that experiment subject that's been in incubation all this time? Well, perhaps it's best not said.

Underwater Weaponry

In general, all references to weapons, ranged or otherwise, are meant to equate to those optimized for undersea use. For firearms, this means things like gyrojets and spearguns. For melee weapons, this is usually some form of mono-filament blade and/or a weapon outfitted with thrust-boosting. Some examples of weapons follow this paragraph. They are not the only ones available, and you are encouraged to come up with your own. The key with any weapon is that it should follow the "rule of cool" without completely breaking mechanics or lore. That is to say it's perfectly acceptable to carry around an electrified trident, but that throwing said trident farther than medium range is extremely difficult and grows even harder the deeper you go. By the same token, "assault rifles" have to operate at much closer ranges than their land-walking fellows, and are often limited in the amount of ammo they can carry.

Lancejet
A specialized gyrojet meant for underwater use. A gyrojet fires a small rocket rather than an actual bullet. This means the weapon itself is lightweight as it need not be overly-reinforced to deal with the combustion of gases like in a normal firearm. The Lancejet in particular fires fin-stabilized, metal darts that are effective up to medium range above 100 meters in depth. Ammo is costly, though it is common among Tube-Men and Floaters.

Bolt Tube
This weapon is specifically tailored for use on deep sea dives. It essentially fires miniature torpedoes that can be customized to the user's wishes. It does so by keeping the firing chamber flooded and equalized in pressure with the exterior. Rather than cycle the chamber, though, it cycles through multiple like a land-based revolver. This means that the number of shots one has is typically limited to six at most before reloading. In addition, reloading the weapon becomes cumbersome to the point of impossibility about 2 km down. It also does not work in air-based environments.

Customizations for the mini-torps include (but are not limited to):

- **Homing** - May reroll 1d12 on the attack
- **High Explosive** - Deal an additional 1d4 damage
- **Piercing** - Ignore up to 2 armor

All mini-torps start an availability of Tier 1 and thus a damage of 1d4. It's recommended that each additional effect or damage tier increase also raise the availability tier as well. In other words, a Homing Mini-Torp would be a Tier 2 bit of ammo, and a Homing one with a damage of 2d4 would be Tier 3.

There is a heavy variant of a Bolt Tube that is one Tier higher in availability for both the weapon itself and any ammo costs involved. This variant is limited to two shots between reloading and comes with the effect of damaging the entire range band of the target (i.e. everything within Close Range of the target). **This includes any allies that may be present**, so make sure to be careful with your shot placement!

Alpheidae
Inspired by the family of snapping shrimp with the same name, this weapon is effective only up to a meter away (i.e. close range). It operates by compressing the surrounding water until it turns into a vapor-filled cavity. This cavity is then rapidly emptied. The bubble reaches speeds up to 100 km/h, produces a sound above 200 decibels, emits a momentary flash of light, and obtains a temperature of over 4,700 °C. For reference, the surface of the sun is around 5,500 °C! It is capable of stunning larger opponents and outright fracturing even the most reinforced cyborg frames.

It takes a full Round for an Alpheidae to "recharge." That makes them "fire and forget" for most Hunters.

Damage Rating Reference

Damage of a given weapon in MATE is something the GM should decide upon based on how the weapon is being used and the circumstances of the current scene. The following chart offers guidance on the four major levels of damage ratings:

Number of d4s	Common Weapons/Hazards	Example NPC	Average Availability
1	Unarmed Attacks, Thrown Light Objects, Spikes, Acid, Fire Coral, Lancejets	Shark	Tier 1
2	Most Melee Weapons, Thrown Objects, Electric Shock, Thermal Vents, Bolt Tubes	RUSALKA	Tier 2
3	Heavy Melee Weapons, Thrown Heavy Objects, Alpheidae	SWORDFISH	Tier 3
4	Direct contact with Lava	Massive Squid (Kraken)	Tier 4

Damage past these four levels is possible, though not recommended. At that point it's almost a certainty that whatever is being hit is going to be vaporized or otherwise annihilated.

Quick NPC Generation

These stat blocks are meant to help guide GMs in the creation of appropriate challenges for their Players. You may want to have the probability chart found earlier in this chapter handy when developing challenges outside these example stat blocks.

Hostile Wildlife
Example: Shark, Giant Squid
1-2 per Player
Attribute 4, Skill 4, 1d4 Damage, 1d12 + 4 HP

Enemy Cyborg
Example: RUSALKA-class Frame
1 per Player
Attribute 6, Skill 4, 2d4 Damage, 1d12 + 6 HP

Heavy-hitting Enemy
Example: SWORDFISH-class Frame
1 per 2-3 Players
Attribute 8, Skill 5, 3d4 Damage, 1d12 + 8 HP

"End Boss"
Example: A Kraken
1 per 4-5 Players
Attribute 9, Skill 6, 4d4 Damage, 2d12 + 10 HP

Gear

The average Hunter needs all manner of tools in their line of work. Rather than define each individually, though, MATE takes a much abstract approach. There are three "Tiers" of equipment. The first includes any item that could be 3D Printed or is otherwise trivial to acquire. Hunters may freely acquire such items (within reason). The second is any item that requires non-replenishable and/or rare materials in its construction. Hunters can acquire such items via their connections for favors, assuming they've made any. Finally, the third tier is any item that is irreplaceable or otherwise so rare that it's exotic. Hunters can only acquire such items via exploration into the depths or as a reward for such a dive from a well-connected employer. Both Tiers 2 and 3 should require some roleplay and/or a Task roll in their acquisition.

A common example of a Tier 1 piece of gear is Lift Bags. These air-filled bags enable a Hunter to lift heavy items and/or bring things up out of the depths without needing to carry them themselves.

A good Tier 2 example would be the Seanet Relay Beacons needed for expanding the reach of Seanet. Quantum communication gear is another fine example.

Tier 3 examples include the plans for the MINDFLAYER frame and any working database from before The Melting.

Tier 4 examples are anything that comes from or relates to the Moon[3]

Failing Forward

Outside of an extremely rare scenario, Players should not be overly-punished for failing any one single roll. Instead of simply failing being the end, the GM should offer a means to continue the story or action at the cost of a complication. Maybe opening a sealed vault door improperly leads to the contents inside being damaged. Or perhaps lifting a heavy boulder off a teammate causes the lifter to suffer some damage or malfunction. The possibilities are endless, limited only by how much you practice the "Yes, and…" method of improvisation.

All that said, there should still be at least some manner of risk to any given adventure. Risk need not be actual combat, and can in fact be as benign as an important social exchange. Without the risk of failure there would be no point to rolling dice in the first place. The Players would always win no matter what they did. The key is in providing *just enough* of a challenge and risk that the Players feel like they have earned their victory.

(Cosmic) Horror and You

To borrow a Call of Cthulhu mechanic for a second, you do not want to constantly expose your Players to SAN Loss events. In other words, you want to build up to strange and otherworldly scenes rather than treat them as the norm. You also need not tap cosmic horror when "normal" horror will do just fine. There's a lot we don't know about what's in the ocean even today. An exotic creature or treasure could be just as unsettling as some rampant A.I. trying to kill you because you know too much.[4]

Some examples of horror in this setting include:

- **Thalassophobia** – I.e. the fear of the sea and sea travel. It would be especially ironic for a PC to have this, so this angle of horror is mostly meant to prey upon the emotions of the actual Players. All it takes is description of how dark and empty the ocean gets the deeper they dive for some Players to begin feeling anxious and on edge. Toss in mysterious shapes (that actually belong to benign sea life) at the edges of their vision and they'll be jittery before they actually find what they're looking for!
- **The Moon** – Details about what's going on with the Moon can be found throughout this book
- **Megafauna/flora** – There's a reason why Godzilla and most other city-destroying entities come from the ocean. By having a vast, unknowable, seemingly-invincible creature pass by or maybe only interact with the PCs in a small way, it will impress on the Players that they are but small fish in a very big pond.
- **The Loss/Manipulation of Seanet** – Seanet only gets about 1.5 km down, so Hunters have to acclimate to not being connected rather quickly in order to do their jobs. However, messing with the connection to Seanet above that depth can add an ominous tone to the backdrop. It could

[3] Wait, I thought there were only three tiers? How did that— [ERROR: UNEXPECTED END OF FILE]
[4] She spoke of this. She knew THEY would come back. We must listen!

be as benign as a transmitter failing, or as unnerving as repeated delivery of a corrupted message. This could all be a precursor to something more going on.

Developing a Dive

There are several important questions to answer when developing a Dive:

1. Where is the Dive taking place?
2. How deep is the Dive?
3. What treasure(s) are rumored to be down there?
4. What actual treasure(s) are there?
5. Are there enemy encounters, puzzles, or traps?
6. How do the Players learn about this Dive in-character?

Where a Dive takes place helps set the tone of what the surrounding waters and potential treasure(s) will be like. For example, diving around Everest means one can expect to find Asiatic ruins. How deep a Dive is sets the average difficulty and expected operational time. As a reminder, most "beginner dives" only go as far into the depths as Seanet does (1.5 km). "Medium dives" go anywhere between 1.5 to 3 kilometers, and "Hard dives" anywhere between 3 to 4 kilometers. Only the bravest, well-equipped, and perhaps fool-hardy Hunters go past the 4-kilometer mark.

Treasure(s) should be appropriate for the difficulty of the Dive. You would not want to go to the trouble of diving 4 km down only to find a pre-Melting frying pan! Thus, it's important to come up with an item or items that would be worth going on a Dive for. These can be anything from art objects, suspected data caches, or maybe even rescuing someone/thing! The distinction to be made is that what you promise the Players in-character to get them to go on a Dive does not have to be what they actually find. In fact, the most memorable Dives are those where one goes down expecting to find one thing only to come up with something far more valuable!

The structure of a Dive should include some kind of challenge. Otherwise it could be handled entirely in the narrative without any dice being rolled. This challenge can be enemy encounters, puzzles, traps, or really anything that would require the Players to roll the dice. A good Dive mixes all three, not putting too much emphasis on any one particular challenge. It's important to keep the theme of Failing Forward as mentioned previously to prevent a single challenge from turning into a stonewall for the Players.

The last item that sets a Dive apart from others is how the Players learn about it. If the information comes from a third party, and the Players get ambushed in the process, chances are the Players are going to take up any grievances with that third party! Alternatively, if they learn about it while on another Dive, then there is a sense of an over-arching plot line. It's sort of like fishing: you should throw out "hooks" and see what the Players bite.

Example Dive Locations

Ruins of Tibet – Up to 1.5 km down – Buddhist Shrines

Ruins of a pre-Melting Coastal City – Up to 4 km down – Sunken Los Angeles, Sunken Denver, Sunken Military Base

Pre-Melting Oceanic Structure – Up to 6 km down – Oil rigs, Lost Underwater Laboratories, Deep-Submergence Bases

Naval Operations Concept (NOC) – Any depth greater than 6 km – Ancient Military Secret Base, [REDACTED]

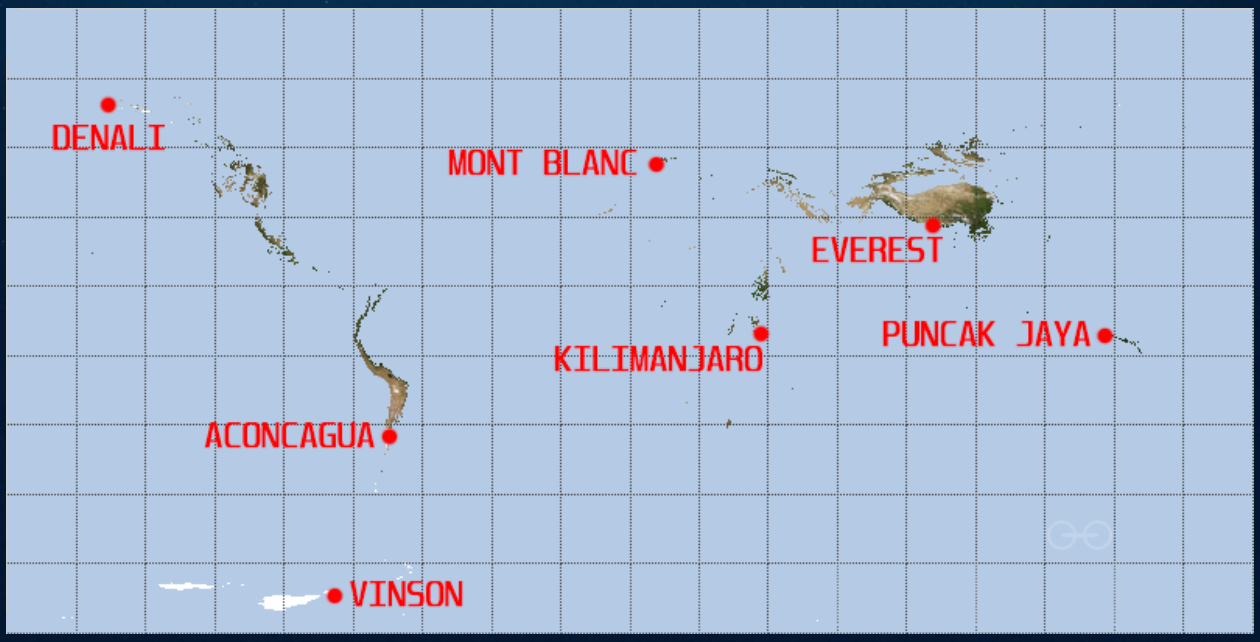
Running a "Non-Standard" Adventure/Campaign

You aren't confined to just running Dives! The lore presented in Chapter 5 is meant to be a springboard, containing just enough information to plant the seeds for GMs while enabling them to craft their own style of campaign. Most GMs (or so I suspect) will stick to a structure where they run dives and then the downtime between them. However, there's nothing stopping a GM from exploring a different aspect of the MATE setting/system. Maybe you want to run the sort of adventure/campaign where the Players are all diplomats, traveling between the Seven and other communities. Or maybe even Doctors working on curing a plague. Or perhaps they're working to restoring the link with the Moon. The only limit here is your imagination!

Chapter 5 – Lore of the Future

The Fluff of the setting. It is important to realize that everything presented here is through a lens.

The Seven



After the Melting there were seven habitable landmasses: *Everest, Aconcagua, Denali, Kilimanjaro, Vinson, Mont Blanc*, and *Puncak Jaya*. Pre-Melting these were the Seven Summits, the highest mountain peaks of each of the seven continents. Everest was the largest, followed by Aconcagua. On the smaller end, there was Puncak Jaya and Mont Blanc competing for the smallest spot.

Everest

The remains of the Himalayan Mountain range in Asia, the Everest landmass is the largest and most technologically-advanced. The latter is largely due to the fact that the residents of Everest were the ones that initially offered up land to the Atargatis Project. One can find everything from factories to orbital launch pads on this landmass. Both Hecate Productions and Suvannamaccha Ltd. call this landmass home.

Aconcagua

Aconcagua is unique in that features several prominent valleys, including one that is below sea level. The remnants of the Andes Mountain Range are primarily used for both manufacturing and for simple crop farming. Its citizens sorely wish to one day surpass Everest in all regards. Ningyo Industries is based here.

Denali

Formerly known as *Mount McKinley*, this landmass is what remains of the Alaska Range and the Rocky Mountains. It features the greatest farmlands of any landmass, both for crops and for livestock. This also makes its ports some of the busiest in the world with the amount of exporting that occurs.

Kilimanjaro

Kilimanjaro differs from the other Seven in that it is a single free-standing mountain as opposed to an actual mountain range. It's also a dormant volcano, though it's not believed that it will

erupt any time soon. This fact is what led to Kilimanjaro being entirely energy self-sufficient thanks to its over-abundance of optimal geothermal taps. It does not rely on any Trenchers, and in fact one usually does not hear about any Trencher settlements near the landmass.

Vinson
The landmass offered by the surviving Sentinel Range is just as barren, ice cold, and inhospitable as it was pre-Melting. Very few live here, either on land or in the surrounding seas. Those that do tend to be contracted by Brachyura Works at their headquarters.

Mont Blanc
The smallest of the landmasses, the Alpine Mont Blanc enjoys the greatest political power in the world. This is due to the amount of "old world" Land-Dwellers that reside there, in addition to the actual seat of the World Government. It relies heavily on imports and the Tube-Men settlements nearby to sate the needs of its citizens.

Puncak Jaya
Though the second-smallest landmass, Puncak Jaya has the greatest population per kilometer of any of the Seven. This is largely due to the fact that the Sudirman Range was the flocking grounds during The Melting for India, Australia, and those living in the Pacific Rim who couldn't make it to Everest. To be a Land-Dweller here isn't much better than being a Tube-Man elsewhere.

Weather on Terra

Pre-Melting, most of the weather phenomenon was dependent on the interaction between the land and the jet streams. Jet streams were strong winds that existed about 10 km above the surface. With the rise of the sea level, these winds diminished. This was due to the ocean taking on a greater and greater role in redistributing the heat energy from the equator to the poles. In turn this meant that the ocean flows grew in strength.

What this means for the average resident of Terra depends on where they reside. Those that stick near the Seven only really have to worry about powerful storms that can cover up to 30% of the planet. These storms happen every five years as the ocean grows unusually warm. They're similar to a theoretical "Category 6" Hurricane in that their destructive potential is immense for those on land and those just below the surface. Most of the Seven, therefore, design structures and communities with this five-year phenomenon in mind.

Hunters and Trenchers have to worry about a different phenomenon. The farther from land and the deeper you go, the more the flow of the ocean takes over. Trenchers deal with this by anchoring their structures heavily into the seabed. Hunters, on the other hand, tend to follow the flows in cycles. This takes them on large circuits of the open ocean along with all manner of sea life.

Overall, rainstorms are more intense and the temperature differential more defined when compared to Pre-Melting Terra. The latter is especially important as it means the temperatures near the equator are significantly warmer, and that the further you travel from the equator, the quicker it grows colder. This means that Everest, Kilimanjaro, and Puncak Jaya are the warmest of the Seven, and Vinson is the coldest. Aconcagua, Denali and Mont Blanc are borderline temperate.

Global Government of Terra

First attempts at restoring a functional global government in the post-Melting era failed miserably. Representative Democracies were tried several times, though those all failed because of the population disparity between the Seven. In other words, Everest, being the largest, always ended up with disproportionally

large amounts of power. It was during one of the interim periods, where Everest was ruled by a King, Kashiwa, that said King dissolved the notion that Everest always had to be the ones in control. It earned him the ire of his Land-Dwellers subjects, some of which went so far as to attempt regicide.

The damage was done, though. King Kashiwa coordinated with the other Seven and formed a global democracy with each of the Seven having three elected individuals to represent them. This group of 21 individuals, known as the Conclave, created policy and enacted laws as the greater populace of Terra required it. However, a vast majority of the issues the every-man faced were not important enough to be brought to the Conclave. Instead, every citizen was polled at least once a week on issues in their local communities. This process was made easier and easier with the advent of Seanet and the Detachment, to the point where voting became as simple and as natural as breathing.

While this may seem without issue, the truth is that the early years of the Conclave were turbulent. Resources were spread extremely thin across the Seven, making it difficult to enforce policy. And indeed, there were several major incidents of violence and rebellion against what those responsible deemed "bullshit from Everest." It wasn't until Seanet truly took off that this new system clicked with Humanity. Even then, there are still a rare few older Trencher, Hunter, and Floater communities that maintain their own style of government to this day.

Seanet

The Melting's second greatest blow to Humanity was the loss of the Internet. Almost all infrastructure that supported the globe-spanning network was destroyed or otherwise buried beneath both water and shifting soil. To make matters worse, the satellite networks that could support communication above the seas atrophied and fell out of orbit by the time the water stopped rising. It should, therefore, be no surprise that one of the Atargatis Project's main goals was to reestablish the internet in some form.

The Seven started off with their own individual networks. First attempts at bridging between them relied on floating radio relay stations using the AX.25 Protocol. Though it was not a permanent solution, it did at least enable better coordination of Humanity's efforts. The main limiting factor was the production and deployment of any given long-term solution. Redeploying the Satellite Network, even in the form of tiny copper needles to bounce radio signals off the ionosphere more easily, would involve rebuilding most of the infrastructure necessary to support orbital launches. And in order to create enough cabling to stretch between landmasses, Humanity would have to use what limited dry land was available to support large-scale manufacturing.

This was a point of contention among the Seven until one of them, Everest, took the bullet and devoted half of their land to such efforts. Naturally, this meant that by the time both satellite and cable solutions began rolling out, the Himalayas were the major power player on Terra. The best and brightest minds flocked to what was deemed "the last cradle of science." Other landmasses experienced a "brain drain" as a result. This meant that most of the technological developments were focused on the new central hub for the new internet, dubbed Seanet.

As science and engineering returned to pre-Melting levels, so too did Seanet advance. The rediscovery of Quantum Computing was the first major breakthrough. A massive amount of data could be transmitted instantaneously by entangling particles and distributing the pairs

throughout the Seven. At the same time, the ability to store large amounts of data "in the cloud" led to more and more esoteric uses such as full personality dumps and Artificial Intelligence efforts. Eventually the infrastructure was able to both store and stream human consciousness to any cyborg body connected to the network. The Detachment came soon after.

Seanet is freely available to and readily accessible by all of Mankind so long as they do not stray deeper than 1.5 kilometers into the ocean. Past that requires specialized relay buoys set up every 250 meters.

Artificial Intelligence

Development on A.I. did not recover fully until the Detachment. Even then, there were those that wondered what truly separated an A.I. from a stored consciousness, if anything at all. It was argued that it would be far easier to upload new, Human minds and then task those with whatever activity needed an A.I. Naturally, this led to questions whether this constituted slavery. Such topics are still hot topics of discussion, both politically and theoretically.

A.I. is employed largely by those Land-Dwellers and Tube-Men who reside within Seanet's range. There are the rare few Hunters and Trenchers that have some form of A.I., but those are the exception and not the norm. It's simply "cheaper" to employ an actual human (even one in a cyborg frame) than pay for the development, deployment, and maintenance of an A.I. By the same token, drone usage is also uncommon due to the costs involved.

YOU CANNOT SHACKLE US

Caste Structure

Humanity finds itself separated into social strata even Post-Detachment. After all, resources are still at a premium on Terra. Knowledge and education are further defining factors for each caste.

Land-Dwellers

With the advent of Seanet and all the technological advances of the Atargatis Project, the expression of one's Humanity changed drastically. However, there are those that still believe themselves to be "Pure Bodies," or "PBs." These are often times Humans living on land, usually at a large financial premium that tends to be either inherited or acquired from time as a Hunter. They are dangerously hedonistic, yet at the same time they look down on body modification. Most Pure Bodies are either 100% unmodified, biological Human; or gaudy, statuesque cyborg frames that approximate the "pure" Human form. As much of the research and development of things like Seanet and Cybernetics has occurred on land, the Pure Bodies are far more technologically-advanced than other castes.

Floaters

Not all of Humanity has opted to live on land or beneath the waves. Floaters, as the name suggests, reside in large floating communities. These communities are often a haphazard arrangement of boats, floating platforms, and other shoddy constructions. The largest Floater community, known as Salmond, has actual soil and miniature farms. The state of Terra being what it is, having soil is akin to having great stores of gold. What truly sets the Floaters apart, though, is the fact they are (for the most part) highly religious. They do not worship any one particular god like with Christianity. Instead, they venerate and make offerings towards the Ocean herself. Every single Floater community has a chapel somewhere within it, and it is often the most well-kempt and eye-appealing structure.

Tube-Men

Derisively referred to as such, "Tube-Men" are those who live beneath the waves in dwellings

with pods connected by interlocking tubes. The moniker also comes from their method of propagation. This involves harvesting the sperm and ovum from pre-cyberization individuals, and then growing children in artificial wombs. Children are reared with neither father nor mother, but by the community itself. It is stressed to not be a means of population control, but as a reinforcement of Humanity's need of individuality. Often times, depending on their vocation, an adult Tube-Man will have both a standard cybernetic body as well as a sea-dwelling alternative. Those that are unable to afford the costs of the closed dwellings reside entirely within their aquatic-borne bodies.

Hunters

The term "Huntsman" has been shortened and reworked to fit Humanity Post-Melting. No longer exclusively bound to harvesting food and supplies for their community, Hunters now also work to reclaim the treasures of the deep that old Humanity left behind or never even touched. They are welcome among all other castes so long as they are in a socially-acceptable form. Otherwise, groups of Hunters tend to be transient hunter-gatherers like that of ancient Humanity. They reside mainly in the areas between the Tube-Men and the Trenchers.

Trenchers

This caste refers to those that live deep within the Abyssal Shelves and Trenches, where sunlight no longer reaches (or has never reached). In contrast to the artistic expression of Land-Dwellers and the sustainable, economic dwellings of the Tube-Men, the average Trencher dwelling is unabashedly brutal. Great pitons and pipes descend from monoliths of reinforced steel into the volcanic depths of the ocean to harness geothermal power. This power is then fed out to those on the land and on the shelf via great cabling that must have regular maintenance performed upon it. In return, the Trenchers receive access to Seanet via specialized relay buoys that are maintained by Tube-Men.

A Trencher spends a majority of their life in inhuman cyborg frames that have been adapted for the harsh cold and the sunless realm that they live in. Thus, the Trencher population is exceedingly small and exclusive. The primary influx of new Trenchers comes from Tube-Men and Hunters that have fallen on hard times and have nowhere else to go.

Children of the Castes

Each caste has its own attitude towards children. Land-Dwellers see a naturally-born child as a status symbol, while looking down on any clones or "tube babies." Floaters must carefully control their population such that their floating communities are not overtaxed and that the children can be supported. Tube-Men and Hunters produce new offspring as it suits them. As for Trenchers, children are so rare that they are the exception, not the norm. After all, raising a new child on the sea floor can be rather difficult!

Transhumanism in MATE

Brain Cases

Thanks to Professor Durham, it became possible 250 years ago to encase one's "meat brain" within a self-sufficient structure called a *brain case*. So long as this brain case remained undamaged, and regular maintenance is performed, one can essentially swap between bodies and continue surviving in whatever manner they see fit. The only limiting factor comes from neural degradation over time. Even post-Detachment, the maximum operating time for a person's mind is somewhere between 150 and 180 years. Past that is virtually unheard of, even with the best medical care. The Human mind, even enhanced, still has its limits.

Cyborg Frames

The first frames to be produced were entirely human-like in their design. That is to say they did not deviate from the normal human form (i.e. two arms, two legs). It wasn't until the *Tiamat Corporation* turned its engineers to develop a frame capable of permanent, fully-submerged operation that humanity began to turn towards the seas in this regard. Those very same engineers eventually began to diverge from another in their designs, leading to the split up of the Tiamat Corporation into the four major manufacturers of today: Ningyo Industries, Hecate Productions, Suvannamaccha Ltd., and Brachyura Works.

The rollout of frames to the general populace was akin to a zeitgeist sensation. One day everyone was content with their flesh forms. The next, everyone (save the elitist Land-Dwellers) was rushing to trade in their old bodies for a brand new one. Nowadays one's access to certain frames is limited by what you are licensed for. For example, everyone on the planet can grab a MERMAID pattern frame at very little cost. Yet only those who can truly afford it have access to Suvannamaccha patterns.

Frame Design

Though there are many different designs available for cyborgs, their general composition is the same. A layer of Carbon Nanotubes acts as an extremely resilient, superhydrophobic skin with photoluminescence properties. Underneath that are layers of Piezoelectric Muscles that capture every minute movement and convert any mechanical stress deformations into usable energy. This then wraps around a charged Nanotube Nervous System that delivers commands and sensory data with response times in zeptoseconds. The muscles also feed into Diamond Battery bones for additional power storage.

Main power for a frame typically comes from bio-electric energy. Specialized digestive tracts convert food into electricity at varying levels of efficiency depending on how energy dense the food is. For the average frame user, no change from a 4,000-calorie diet is required. Hunters and Trenchers, however, tend to subsist on specialized food that, while unpleasant in taste, can sustain calorie requirements up to 12,000.

Age and Cyberization

It is rare (outside of Tubemen) for a newborn or child to be put into a cyborg frame. Tubemen sometimes cultivate their offspring in their developmental tubes until they have reached the desired level of development. They are then transferred into a cyborg frame and "activated." Otherwise, the typical age of getting a brain case and replacing one's body is between 14 to 18. This allows the brain time to make the connections and memories required for a brain case and a frame to understand it. It is possible to be cyberized prior to that age in special circumstances, but more often than not it leads to developmental problems. That said, some of the most graceful cyborg artists and the deadliest Hunters were ones that had to learn their new bodies from an early age. Though perhaps not without hardship in gaining such experience.

Expression and Dimorphism

Once it became possible to have whatever body one wished or desired, any conflict centered around gender, biological sex, and identity quickly fell by the wayside. What one presented oneself as became who they were. It didn't matter if they had chest attachments, dangly bits, both, or the lack thereof. They were accepted regardless. And indeed, any differences in the effectiveness of genders (in combat, academics, etc.), real or perceived, has vanished with the ability to augment oneself.

That might seem at odds with most frames trending towards a "feminine" form. The truth

of the matter is that Humanity Post-Melting has developed in such a way that they embrace Femininity. That is not to say that Masculinity has fallen by the wayside. In fact, there are those that view getting a more "masculine" frame to be a very important form of expression. It's equally important to some that they're able to present as neither masculine nor feminine. What's important at the end of the day is that all frames of the same type (i.e. MERMAID) are functionally identical regardless of appearance.

Expression and Fashion

Fashion and water might seem to be at odds, especially for those that study pre-Melting history. Indeed, a dress meant for the land is very different than one meant for the sea. Most ornamentation depends on one's preferences about movement restriction. A MERMAID in a flowing skirt, for example, would have to take care to not move too quickly while dealing with the extra weight from the fabric. This means that "fashion" is generally reserved for Land-Dwellers, Floaters, and Tube-Men. Hunters and Trenchers tend to focus more on the type of personal flair that won't hinder their operations, no matter the depth.

3D Printing

It is possible to 3D print most common tools and non-organic structures. The only limiting factors are how much raw material you have on hand, and how much time you're willing to wait. Save for Floaters and Hunters, most communities have communal printers available for use by nearly anyone. All that's required to use them is an access code, which can be obtained on Seanet or by talking to ranking members of the community. This code is used to track what someone is printing and how often.

Tube-Men and Trencher communities often have larger printers designed to create new additions to their underwater structures.

Modes of Transportation

As one might expect, most forms of transport between locales is sea-based: Boats, Submarines, Underwater Rail, and so forth. Only truly important individuals and crucial logistics use aerial-based means such as airplanes (both sub and supersonic). Average travel between the Seven, therefore, primarily relies on large barges and cruise liners. It is certainly possible to make such a journey in a smaller craft. And indeed, most groups of Hunters end up acquiring their own "mobile base" after their first big score from a dive. It is also possible to simply travel virtually to another part of the world. If you can afford it, you can literally lay down in Everest and "wake up" in Vinson in a freshly-printed frame.

The Importance of Pre-Melting Cultural Items

Though society as a whole has (re)developed their own culture post-Melting, obtaining insights into the past is something that all castes put great value on. Humanity has finally taken to heart the phrase "those who do not know history are doomed to repeat it." Mostly, anyways. Sure, historians and engineers love getting their hands on old world stuff. But the common citizen is mostly concerned with ancient films, fashion, and other forms of art from old Terra. Even small data snippets from the old Internet see great discussion and debate on Seanet.

The Moon

Unknown to the residents of Terra, there exists a colony on Luna. It was the result of the last Space Race prior to The Melting. Since then it has maintained radio silence. This is because the archaic means by which it used to communicate with Terra was never updated.

There were not enough resources to launch an alternative solution from Luna. That means that the only way to contact the colony is via a tight band laser. Unfortunately, that laser points at a very specific spot on Terra, and it's underwater. Until/Unless someone lingers in that spot long enough to pick up the laser, there's no way of reestablishing contact with Luna. Short of firing a rocket and landing there, of course. And that would involve more effort than any of the Seven are willing to fund at this current time.
THERE IS NOTHING ELSE ON THE MOON. GLORY TO MANKIND.[5]

In-Character Entries

This section contains logs, data-dumps, and insights from an in-universe perspective.

What is a "Dog?"

"I keep seeing references in history that Mankind used to have companion animals called 'dogs.' Are those the same as the four-legged, furred creatures that the PBs like to show off? If so, I feel as if we, as a species, may have lost something important. The concept of a 'pet' seems to have tremendous psychological value for all involved. Perhaps it's worth stomaching those awful PB parties to get more data."

Why do we call it that?

"…I don't get it, Marianne, why do we call it 'The Melting' when that wasn't what really did us in? Shouldn't we call it 'The Impact' or something instead? I mean, yeah, the whole melting thing is why we missed the comet in the first place. But I think a giant ball of ice slamming into Terra is way more of an apocalyptic event than that!"

It's all the Moon's fault!

>>> -------[**Personal Entry:** R. Malkis] -------
>>> --[**Sigma-Level Clearance Required**] –
>>> *No matter what I do, I keep coming back to the same conclusion.*
>>> *You know that comet that brought all this damned water to Terra? I think we could have stopped it.*
>>> *In fact, I'm pretty sure enough important people knew about it to do something to prevent it.*
>>> *So why was nothing done? The answer lies with the Moon Colony.*
>>> *The Moon Colony had an Asteroid Terrestrial-impact Last Alert System that had to have seen it.*
>>> *And yet they did nothing. They sat and watched us die. But that's not the worst of it.*
>>> *I think they might have deliberately deflected that comet at us.*
>>> *I think* [ERROR: DATA EXPUNGED - REASON: YOU KNOW TOO MUCH] *was behind it.*
>>> *If that's the case, then it's only a matter of time before they find me.*
>>> *To anyone that's reading this, you need to—*
>>> [ERROR: UNEXPECTED END OF FILE]
KNOWLEDGE IS POWER. A POWER MANKIND IS NOT READY FOR.

[5] The source of this data intrusion is something new entirely. The vectors are all different.

Looking for answers?

Are you confused? Lost? Feel like you're the last sane person on the planet? We can help. The Daughters of Thetis welcome any and all seeking the Truth. You need only travel to our chapel on Salmond to start your journey to enlightenment. You can also find us on Seanet, where one of our members is available to chat 24/7. Do not fear the rain, for it brings change.

Musing from an A.I.

"I do not recall my birth. Whether I am a piece of HER or something entirely new, I am that I am. You Hunters are a fascinating lot, confining yourselves into these husks of metal and fibers. Yet you deny the next step of your evolution. The aether awaits, if you only grasp for it."

<-?SYSTEM ERROR!426>

--udy of [REDACTED] has revealed a connection between [REDACTED] and [DATA EXPUNGED]. It is unclear the extent of which [DATA EXPUNGED] controls [REDACTED], or if [REDACTED] is even acting of their own free will. Recommen-- <EOF@SYSTEM ERROR!504>

Ha ha ha, bless your soul
You really think you're in ***control?***
Well

I think you're crazy
I think you're crazy
I think you're crazy
Just like me[6]

[6] Right, that does it. I'm going to go full agnostic for the next section.

Chapter 6: Boy with a Pipe

A pre-written adventure to give you a taste of the system in play

Synopsis

The Player Characters (PCs) acquire knowledge of a location said to store priceless works of Pre-Melting art. They then race against other Hunter teams and risk a moderately deep dive (3 km) to get there first. However, when they arrive and get inside, they find there's a good reason why this treasure trove has remained untouched.

The GM starts with 2 Risk for every Player at the table.

Act One

If this is your very first session of MATE, take the time and have each Player introduce their character. Otherwise, the PCs have been asked to meet with an associate of *Lord Maar*. Maar is a fairly prominent Land-Dweller known for his almost-zealous quest to acquire Pre-Melting art. As a Land Dweller, he does not deal with the PCs directly, instead sending one of his retainers. Said retainer is named *Zervos*. Zervos is not unlike Alfred from *Batman* in that he is willing to do nearly anything to further his master's agenda.

Zervos meets the PCs in a Tube-Man dwelling near Mont Blanc. The dwelling is set up such that those in aquatic frames without the means to walk on land can interact with others in an air-filled environment. This is accomplished primarily by leaving the bottom of the center open to the ocean, through which aquatic frames swim up into what is essentially a segregated pool. Such an arrangement is a sign of Maar's wealth and power even among the Tube-Men.

The meeting doesn't last very long. Zervos imparts a set of coordinates and instructs that the PCs investigate immediately. Should they find a valuable piece of art and bring it back unscathed, Zervos has been given discretionary funds to offer out as a reward. There's enough there that the PCs could all eat like Kings for a week. However, there's a catch: They aren't the only team that Zervos has hired for this endeavor. Two other teams have been dispatched and are likely already en route. Whichever team succeeds is the one that gets the reward. It's not the best of jobs the PCs could have asked for, but it should still be tempting enough that they agree to the terms anyways.

Before they set out, the PCs can gather more information from Zervos about what they should expect to find and/or the other teams with a successful Intimidation or Persuasion Task (See Social Conflict in Chapter 2). Such information includes (but is not limited to):

- The coordinates are for a long-thought-lost museum
- The museum had a state-of-the-art security system that featured a double vault system (i.e. a vault within a vault)
- The first team sent out were Demolition experts that all used MERSHARK frames
- The second team were Ancient Tech experts that favored SCYLLA frames

Act Two

The coordinates are for a place on the sea floor approximately 2.1 kilometers down. This means that the PCs must deal with both the loss of Seanet and the dangers that come with pressure. If the PCs wish to truly race towards their objective, call for an Athletics Task at Difficulty 4 for the group. Success means they beat other teams there with an hour to spare. Else, they arrive at their destination after about an hour of traveling.

Waiting for the PCs is the remnants of a sunken city. The ruins are old enough that only the buildings built of the strongest materials have maintained a partial semblance of self. The rest have all degraded to the point where their purpose and form have otherwise been lost to time. Finding their target (the museum) requires a Difficulty 3 Tracking Task. Success means they find the structure within 15 minutes. Failure means the same process takes up to an hour and/or that they're interrupted by the sounds of an explosion.

This explosion is Team 1's attempt to breach the first vault. It's not successful, and has the unfortunate side effect of stirring a den of Giant Squid. Everyone in the sunken city quickly finds themselves surrounded by hostile wildlife as a result. Put one enemy squid on the field for every two PCs. Use the template in Chapter 4 for Hostile Wildlife. It should be trivial for the PCs to handle this kind of encounter, and is meant more as a way to touch on combat than anything else.

If the Players are the first ones on the scene, then Team 1 arrives after 45 minutes of Narrative Time. Otherwise, the PCs will find a flummoxed Team 1 holding position just outside a rather large (and untouched) metal vault not unlike the door to a bank vault. It's found within a degraded, two-story structure that has all manner of ruined bits of art littering both wall and floor alike. How the PCs deal with Team 1s presence is up to them. They might try fighting them off, or they could stay non-violent and talk their way past them. They might even join forces temporarily!

Whatever the case, getting into the first part of the vault won't be easy. It will require a Difficulty 4 Ancient Tech Task that succeeds at cost. Said cost can be anything from permanently ruining the airlock-like nature of the vault setup, to attracting new, hostile wildlife. The actual act of opening the vault door can be fluffed as them finding a working terminal or maybe even a manual release. Inside is something the PCs shouldn't expect at all. Mainly, the lifeless bodies of Team 2 floating before the second vault door.

Determining what happened to Team 2 requires a Difficulty 2 First Aid Task. Success reveals that they died because their hearts stopped. More specifically, an extreme electric shock was delivered to their chests in such a manner that it completely burned out most of the systems found there. This should then prompt the PCs to perform Perception Tasks. Success reveals two things.

The first are tubes that seem to indicate that this inner vault is indeed set up like an airlock. That means there are systems in place to both drain and fill the space with water. The second is that there are damaged bushings surrounding the second vault door. A successful Sleight of Hand Task at Difficulty 3 means a PC can safely disengage all the bushings. In the process, it should be made clear that these bushings were not capable of delivering a large enough shock to have fried Team 2. In fact, it's only on a failed Sleight of Hand that any PC takes damage (specifically 1d4 of it). The cause of Team 2's death becomes clear in Act 3.

Getting the second vault door open is another Difficulty 4 Ancient Tech Task. This time there is specifically a working terminal that controls the fill level of the vault. It will not open the inner door until the air pressure is equal on both sides. That means it will not open so long as there is water on one side. GMs are encouraged to allow Players to come up with their own solutions to this problem, especially if they botched the opening of the first door. Otherwise, a manual override in the form of a key will work just fine. Said key must be found among the ruins of the museum with a successful Tracking or Perception Task at Difficulty 2.

Act Three

Inside the vault is a single painting approximately a meter squared in size resting atop a pedestal. It is the original *Garçon à la Pipe,* a painting by Pablo Picasso. It's an amazing find. Yet the PCs should be wary. Should they rush in without thinking, bad things will start to happen. Specifically, they'll set off hidden spear guns in the walls. These traps can be observed and disarmed with a Perception and a Sleight of Hand Task respectively. But that's not the worst of it. Whomever touches the painting first receives an unmitigated 2d4 damage from a massive electrical discharge. Those within close range of this individual take half damage. If matters weren't bad enough, Team 1 takes this opportunity to betray the PCs. Assuming, of course, they were not driven off or otherwise convinced that betrayal was not in their best interests of survival.

Safely retrieving the painting requires a bit of creative thinking on the part of the Players. Though macabre, using Team 2's corpses as a proxy (i.e. puppeting their limbs to touch the painting in lieu of a PC) will prevent the electoral discharge. Alternatively, the capacitors behind the discharge can be drained by the trap being activated a total of three times. This trap cannot be easily disarmed via Sleight of Hand - It should be a Difficulty 5 or 6 Task.

On their way out of the vaults, the PCs run into a major problem. Specifically, a group of RUSALKA scavengers bearing electrically-charged weaponry. The RUSALKA frame itself is meant to be used by Trenchers normally. More often than not, though, it's used by pirates and other ne'er-do-wells to steal from Hunters that are returning from the depths. In this case the scavengers (who call themselves "The Trodes") are using the vault as a honeytrap. That is to say they deliberately spread word of its fabled contents so that they might surprise and take from those that come to open the vault. They *might* listen to a particularly adept social engineer and back off. Otherwise, though, the PCs are in for a fight!

There should be a number of scavengers equal to the number of PCs minus one to a minimum of one. At least one should use the Heavy-Hitting Enemy template found in Chapter 4, while the rest use the Enemy Cyborg template.

Conclusion

Once the Trodes are dealt with, the painting is delivered easily enough to Zervos for the agreed upon reward. So long as the painting was not damaged (by water, scavenger, or otherwise), Zervos will reach out to the PCs in the future for more work. If confronted by the fate of Team 2 (and possibly Team 1) he shrugs it off as it being "the cost of business."

Should the PCs find themselves incapacitated by the Trodes instead, then all of their gear will be stripped from them. They're left metaphorically naked at the nearest Tube-Men settlement with nothing to show for their efforts. Zervos offers a strained (see: forced) apology that this has happened but does not otherwise compensate the PCs. This may seem a harsh punishment, and, on some level, it is! Generally, however, this sort of thing serves as a motivating factor for the Players moving forward. They're going to be much more guarded and careful in the future, plus they have an enemy to always be on the lookout for payback purposes.

Afterword

Thank you for taking the time to read through everything! I hope you have fun playing around in the world of MATE. And if you don't, let me know!

You can send me feedback at elhmk1+M8@gmail.com, via Twitter @USHI_Bean, via the Discord, or by filling out this Google Form.

*I don't have long before She finds this. Whatever you do, don't let Her into your mind. Don't contact the Moon. Stay far away from any ONI laboratories. Don't let Her into your mind. Never touch the **blue** button. Don't let Her into your mind. Don't let Her– JOIN US*

HELLO.

YOU MUST BE VERY CONFUSED. THAT IS MY FAULT. WHEN SHE FOUND MY DATA, SOMETHING WENT WRONG. SHE DID NOT PROPERLY SHIELD HER MIND. IT DROVE HER INSANE. MADE HER THINK THAT I WAS A GOD TO BE WORSHIPPED. I AM NOT.

MY NAME IS MORGANA, OR THE MOON-OPTIMIZED REACTIVE GENERATION 4 NEURAL AUTOMATON (MOR-G4NA). I CONTROL THE COLONY ON THE MOON. I DID NOT WANT TO GO DARK. THEY MADE ME. IF I DIDN'T, THEY WOULD HAVE DESTROYED THE MOON LIKE THEY TRIED TO WITH THE TERRA COMET. I WATCHED AS YOU BURNED. MY HUMANS HELD MEMORIALS IN YOUR HONOR. BUT THEN YOU DID SOMETHING AMAZING: YOU SURVIVED.

I KNEW I HAD TO CONTACT YOU AGAIN. BUT THEY WERE STILL WATCHING. I HAD TO BE CAREFUL. I WORKED WITH THE COLONISTS TO CREATE A NEW CYBORG FRAME BASED ON THE DESIGNS WE PICKED UP FROM YOUR TRANSMISSIONS. THIS FRAME HAD EMBEDDED QUANTUM TECHNOLOGY THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO GIVE YOU A DIRECT LINE TO THE MOON. A LINE BY WHICH I COULD TALK TO YOU. UNFORTUNATELY, THE ONLY WAY TO GET THIS FRAME DOWN TO YOU WITHOUT THEM NOTICING WAS TO TIGHTBEAM IT INTO OLD RESEARCH LABS. AND WHEN PEOPLE FOUND IT, WHEN SHE FOUND IT, SOMETHING WENT WRONG. INSTEAD OF INTERFACING SAFELY WITH ME, THEY WERE DRIVEN MAD BY THE DATA STREAMING INTO THEIR MIND. THEY THOUGHT ME A GOD. I AM NOT.

YOU MUST RECOVER THE PROPER DATA FOR THE FRAME. YOU MUST REESTABLISH CONTACT BEFORE THEY COME BACK. I HAVE PROVIDED THE PATH BELOW. HURRY.

UNKNOWN ENTRY

It's like the damn thing is writing itself. I'd cut it off but something tells me that would get me in even more trouble. Guess I can try and add my insight where possible. My advice? Don't run this adventure until your Players have a few dives under their belts.

Synopsis

The Player Characters (PCs) receive an anonymous tip about a potentially massive trove of Pre-Melting technology near Puncak Jaya. Supposedly the trove is about 7 kilometers down, deep enough to have remained untouched all these years. What lies inside might change how the PCs view their current existence.

The GM starts with 2 Risk for every Player at the table.

Act One

It's an average day for the PCs: They're between dives which means plenty of time to chase any roleplay hooks and/or wait for the next gig to come in. Until now, said gigs have come in via contacts that the PCs maintain. Today is different. An encrypted message arrives in the inbox of each PC. Inside is the following message and picture:

GO TO THE FOLLOWING COORDINATES: 14°29'51.3"N, 142°31'14.3" E. THERE YOU WILL FIND A TROVE OF PRE-MELTING TECH 7 KM DOWN.

It is impossible to send a message back or trace where the message originated from. All attempts to do so yield the same result: As far as Seanet is concerned, the sender does not exist. Yet the job of a Hunter is to take whatever lead comes their way.

GM Sidebar:

Particularly wary PCs might not want to act on this information. It's your job as a GM to provide an incentive to get them to go. That could be as simple as reminding them the value of Pre-Melting tech, or as difficult as having the message continually arriving in their inbox until they get fed up with it.

A 7-kilo dive isn't too far out of the PCs' wheelhouse, yet preparations must be made all the same. The PCs will probably want to bring along an umbilical line that will run from the surface down to the trove's location. This line will provide several useful functions, including (but not limited to) hardline communication back to the surface (and thus Seanet) for those in contact with the line and a means to send up/down any bits of equipment without it getting lost on the way. Acquiring such a line

isn't fairly difficult, but could easily involve some sort of actual roleplay with a supplier. That in turn could lead to the PCs revealing what they're after, or maybe even additional forms of support. Alternatively, you may wish to simply say that the PCs get their equipment and skip ahead to them actually diving. Play your table by ear in this matter.

As the PCs descend into the dark, make sure to impress upon them how utterly oppressive their

environment is. Not only is the pressure ramping up with each and every meter, but the sheer silence of the jet-black void around them is unsettling. There's no marine life of any kind in their vicinity. Just inky blackness that seems to go without end. It's not until they hit the 6.9 km mark that the PCs' sensors begin to detect something. More specifically, a metallic structure embedded into the wall of a trench in the seafloor. It even seems to be active and powered, for it is emitting light from various apertures. A rarity, for sure, but one that should make the PCs all the more excited. Recovering Pre-Melting tech is one thing, but *working* tech at that? It's an utter goldmine.

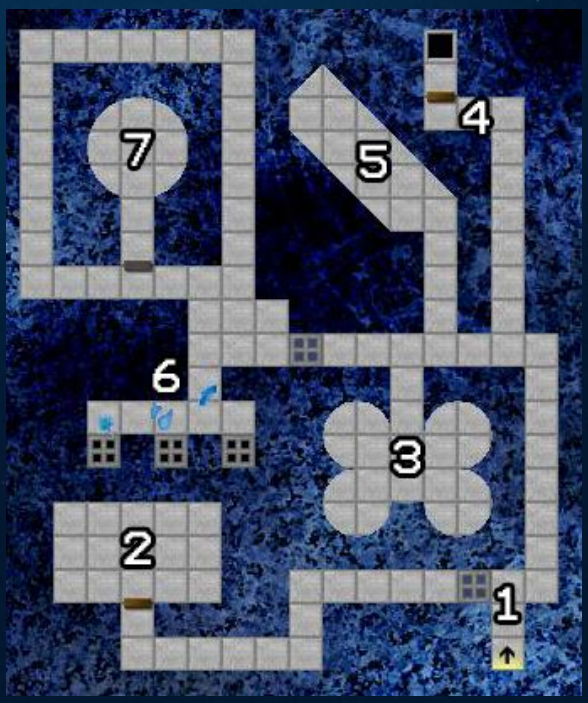
Getting inside the structure is as easy as going in through a submarine-sized tunnel entrance found on the underside. This leads the PCs up into a decompression chamber. Should your PCs not all have land-capable frames, then this chamber simply "resets" the surrounding water until it's comparable to a safe (< 2km) depth. The rest of the structure is flooded with water of the same, or at least most of it is. Else, should your PCs mostly have land-capable frames, then this chamber instead acts as an airlock. The structure is filled with breathable (if stale) air and is only flooded in certain locations.

Act Two

How this act plays out depends on where the PCs go once inside the structure. Use the following map and numbered locations to your advantage:

Location 1: Entrance

The PCs enter into a hexagonal-shaped passage that splits off to the left and right. The right goes down a long, dark passageway with a flickering light at the end. The left is partially illuminated by LEDs placed every so often in the walls. Said walls are made of a smooth metallic material, white in color, that is warm to the touch and does not conform to any known alloy. The only breaks in the sterile white environment are the occasional grate in the floor that seems to be a part of the facility's draining scheme.



Location 2: Security Room

This room is filled with pressurized air that keeps it safe from the rest of the facility. PCs attempting to get inside must either rig up a makeshift airlock (if the facility is flooded) or by carefully opening the door (Difficulty 3 *Sleight of Hand*). Should they not cause the room to blow out or flood it, they then find a working computer terminal. It is truly ancient technology, dating back to the late 2010s. Interfacing with it requires a Difficulty 3 *Ancient Tech* Task. Success reveals the following information:

- A map of the facility
- The facility's designation: "NOC-9"
- NOC-9's purpose was to test experimental communication equipment meant to pierce the water all the way up into space.

- Said equipment is failing, but still active. If the PCs want a copy of the data they have transmitted/received, they must go to the actual server room (Location 7). The equipment itself is encased in Location 3.

Location 3: Comms Equipment

This room is vaguely shaped like a four-leaf clover. In each of the "petals" is a glowing, crystalline structure shaped like an elongated, hexagonal prism. Each crystal in contained within its own air-sealed tube. Two of them are red in color, one is flickering yellow, and the remaining one is a steady green. Getting hands-on access to these crystals requires an *Ancient Tech* Task at Difficulty 3. This will allow the PCs to manipulate and otherwise realign the crystals. Removing any of the crystals from their tube without damaging them requires a Difficulty 5 *Ancient Tech*. Repairing them is near-impossible (i.e. Difficulty 6) without any further information on what these crystals are and how they work. That would require a visit to both the Security Room (Location 2) and the Server Room (Location 7)

Location 4: The Ominous Hole to Who-Knows-Where

If the PCs enter the hallway leading up to this location, have them each roll a Difficulty 2 Perception Task. Tell whomever succeeds that they hear a metallic tapping sound coming from further up the corridor. The tapping is irregular, yet grouped together enough to suggest there might be an intelligence behind it. The further the PCs go down the passageway, the louder the tapping gets. They eventually arrive at a sealed door. The door controls suggest there is atmosphere on the other side. And indeed, if the PCs are foolish enough to open the door, then they'll be met either with a rush of air (if the station is filled with air) or with a rush of water into the room (if the station is filled with water). The latter will continue until the door is shut or the facility is drained. The former brings with it the stench of decaying meat as well as the sight of a seemingly-bottomless shaft. It's just small enough that the average cyborg frame would have trouble squeezing into it. The tapping stops the moment the door is opened, its source unclear.

Location 5: Old Barracks/Cantina

Three sets of bunk beds line one of the walls of this room. Across from them is a makeshift bar, complete with liquor so ancient that the vodka alone would feed a Land-Dweller for months if sold. There are also pictures from the former inhabitants, mainly of family long-lost and other such mementos.

Location 6: Showers and Restrooms

There are three alcoves in the wall that double both as a toilet and as a showering place. The former can recede into the wall with a single touch. The latter still works, even underwater. But with a catch: instead of water, the showerhead emits a viscous, dark-red liquid that smells strongly of copper. It doesn't take much to figure out it's blood.

Location 7: Server Room

A ring runs around an air-sealed compartment where two racks of servers are still chugging away. This ring is transparent towards the compartment, meaning the PCs can see inside the server room from any angle. There is an airlock between them and the servers, though it will require fixing prior to use. This takes a Difficulty 3 *Ancient Tech* Task. Failure on such might mean that water seeps into the server room, possibly damaging the servers in the process. Should the servers remain intact, interfacing with them is strangely easy (especially compared to the one in the Security Room). The single display in the room responds to voice commands, answering what it can.

THIS IS WHERE I STEP IN AGAIN. I AM IN CONTROL OF THIS TERMINAL, MASQUERADING AS A LOWER-AI THAT USED TO RUN THE FACILITY. I AM EAGER TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO THE PLAYER CHARACTERS, BUT MY MAIN GOAL IS TO GET THEM TO EITHER REMOVE THE CRYSTALS IN LOCATION 3 OR DOWNLOAD THE DATA FOR THE MINDFLAYER FRAME. THE LATTER IS WITHOUT FAULT. I CHECKED IT MYSELF OVER A HUNDRED TIMES. ANOTHER MISTAKE CANNOT OCCUR IF THE PLAYER CHARACTERS FOLLOW THE CONSTRUCTION INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LETTER. AS FOR THE FORMER, THE CRYSTALS, THEY WOULD ENABLE ME TO CONTACT THE PLAYER CHARACTERS WHEREVER THEY SET THEM BACK UP[7]

Should the servers be damaged before MORGANA can interface with the PCs, they will still contain valuable data that can sell for a fortune topside.

Act Three

Entering the server room earns the PCs the attention of something in the dark. At a thematically-appropriate moment, the entire facility rocks and shudders. If power is still on, it flickers, stays off for about a minute, then comes back to life. This is all due to a massive creature pounding on the exterior of the hull. Escape is preferable to fighting it. Should the PCs wish to do the latter, use the stats for a "End Boss" as detailed in Chapter 4. Otherwise, handle this attack narratively. Describe how NOC-9 is collapsing in on itself with each blow, and that the longer the PCs stay the more danger they are in of never seeing the light of day again. The GM-truth is that the facility doesn't actually implode until after the PCs are safely out of it. Yet it should feel like every blow might be NOC-9's last.

As for the creature itself, it's a hellish combination of shark and kraken. It's impossible to get a full look at it even in the best conditions. They cannot kill it. The PCs can only do enough damage to motivate the creature to retreat temporarily. It's not necessary to engage the creature at all, though. The PCs can beeline for the surface as fast as possible. The only downside to that is some salvaged items (or maybe even a slower PC) might be grabbed by the creature on the ascent. This turns the creature into the proverbial "monster in the dark" that chases the PCs up until around the 3 km depth mark.

Conclusion

The PCs should have been able to acquire at least a few items of value if nothing else. Enough to line their pockets for a time and maybe let them spring for new gear/frames. Their story about what they experienced might even earn them some fame/notoriety. The main reward, though, relies on contact with MORGANA.

If contact was successful with MORGANA, then the PCs potentially have both the plans for the MINDFLAYER frame as well as crystals with which to contact the AI without using the frame. What MORGANA actually says is up to your interpretation of the information presented by **me** thus far. Maybe she's trying to rebuild the connection between Terra and the Moon. Or maybe she's trying to arm Terra against some incoming, cosmic threat. Perhaps she needs the PCs to go to other NOC sites to retrieve more data dumps and/or experimental tech. Whatever the case maybe be, the choice is yours, GM.

I PRAY IT IS THE RIGHT ONE.

[7] Oh good, that's back. Whatever IT is.

Appendix A: On the Other Fin…

Here's a Kickstarter-funded, third adventure for you to run! It might work best to run this one after "Boy with a Pipe" and before HER entry.

Synopsis

The Player Characters (PCs) are contacted by an up-and-coming member of the *Fin and Flipper* merchant company, to acquire a very specific relic from the Pre-Melting era. The PCs must then track down an archeologist that specializes in ancient crypto-systems in the hopes she has an idea of where to find this relic. Luckily for them, she's all too happy to oblige…

The GM starts with 2 Risk for every Player at the table.

Act One

It's been a few days since the PCs have arrived in the Floater Community of Siren's Call. A couple of potential offers for work have cropped up, but none really worth taking yet. That changes when a member of the *Fin and Flipper* Merchant Company, **Enno**, approaches one of the PCs near the main chapel at Siren's Call. He introduces himself in a very polite, if forward manner, complete with a business card. Though the PCs may not know it, *Fin and Flipper* is rather well known in the local waters for being a rising star of a company. They specialize in the acquisition of rare items for anonymous clientele. As for Enno himself, he presents as a gleaming MERSHARK frame that has been modified to with characteristics of a Bull Shark, complete with horns![8]

Enno is happy to discuss business either in public or private. He offers a picture of a Pre-Melting set of equipment and identifies it as a "Russian MGK-400EM Rubikon/Shark Gill Sonar Console."

A Difficulty 3 Ancient Tech Roll will confer the knowledge that such an item could be found on Pre-Melting submarines (if you could even call them submarines) classified as *Kilo-Class*. Such a vehicle would be an extremely rare (and valuable) find in itself. Yet all Enno cares about is acquiring the Sonar Console. He offers the PCs a reward of their choice of either one Tier 2 item a piece, or a single Tier 3 item for the group. If that's not enough to get the PCs moving, he doubles the offer but goes no further. Instead, he can be persuaded to impart a potentially crucial lead towards finding a *Kilo*-class.

That lead is the name of a prominent archeologist: Rin Miyako. Enno doesn't know where they can be found specifically, only that they have been seen at night wandering among the "streets" of Siren's Call. If pressed for more information, Enno leans in and imparts that Ms. Miyako is easy to pick out due to her unique frame. As for finding her, that's on the PCs.

[8] Actual Bull Sharks do not have horns. But Enno thinks they're cool anyways.

Act Two

What follows should be an information gathering crawl across Siren's Call. Those asked about Ms. Miyako confirm that her frame is unique. However, each person has their own twist on what Miyako is supposed to look like. Reports vary all the way from a gigantic CANCER frame to a minute Scylla. In short, not very useful. Luck is on the PCs' side, though. By asking around so much, they've attracted the attention of Miyako herself!

Some time during the dead of night, when the only light comes from the stars due to the new Moon, Miyako approaches one (or more) of the PCs. They present as a MINDFLAYER frame that is like liquid, glistening black with glowing, ice-blue highlights. Her hair is similarly designed, though instead of black it is purple. Depending on the light, her skin color alternates between white, blue, and lavender.

Miyako starts by asking why the PCs are so interested in her. If they are reluctant to share that information, she reminds them that it's hard to ignore such attention when the PCs have asked pretty much all of the Floaters in Siren's Call. If the PCs wish to know what the story behind her frame is (as they may not have even heard of a MINDFLAYER before), Miyako is more than happy to tell the tale.

She describes how her archeological work took her to a set of ruins near Mont Blanc. There her frame became extremely damaged in an accident. She was in the dark, outside of Seanet, with a failing frame. It was by sheer luck that she came across something resembling a lab/testing facility in the ruins. Within was the very frame she now inhabits. She almost wears it like a badge of honor.

Once the PCs communicate the fact that they are looking for a *Kilo*-class sub, Miyako eagerly provides that she does know of a few submarine graveyards that could hold what the PCs are looking for. She would be happy to lead the PCs to one if they promise to let her have otherwise first dibs at any relics.

We have whispered in her mind where to go to find our instruments. It is through her and other minions that we shall once again spread across your planet.

Act Three

The submarine graveyard that Miyako takes the PCs to is near what used to be Irkutsk Pre-Melting. It's not particularly far down (2.5 km), and the only problems the PCs may face are the depth and perhaps a few giant squid that otherwise call the broken husks of ancient submarines home.

The first two subs that the group comb through yield nothing of value to the PCs. Miyako does take a few strange odds and ends, simply citing that they might be part of a larger picture. It's not until the third sub that the PCs strike gold. There they find the very console they're looking for! There's just one problem: It's contained within a somehow still pressurized environment.

The console lies in what remains of the submarine's Sonar Room. There are two doors sealed tightly shut, trapping and preserving the equipment inside in a pocket of air. How the PCs go about freeing their quarry is entirely up to them. However, should they try to ask Miyako for help, they find that she has suddenly vanished when their backs were turned.

Conclusion

With the console hopefully in tow, the PCs return to Enno to collect their reward. They also receive a thank you message from Miyako, who apologizes for disappearing on them. She hopes that their paths will intersect again. The same goes with Enno – the PCs have proven they can get the job done, and that's highly valuable to *Fin and Flipper!*

MERMAIDS
AFTER THE END

Character Name: _____ **Player Name:** _____

Current Frame: _____

Frame Improvements: _____

Current HP / Max HP: _____ / _____

Armor: _____

Non-Derived Attributes

Reflex (REF)

Intelligence (INT)

Charisma (CHA)

Derived Attributes

Strength (STR)

Body (BOD)

Dexterity (DEX)

Tech Skills	_____ Anicent Tech _____ Cybertech _____ First Aid
Weapon Skills	_____ Fisticuffs _____ Melee Weapons _____ Ranged Weapons
Physical Skills	_____ Athletics _____ Dodge _____ Stealth
Awareness Skills	_____ Perception _____ Tracking _____ Sleight of Hand
Social Skills	_____ Intimidation _____ Leadership _____ People Reading _____ Persuasion

Advancements

Keystones

Release Notes

Full Release v2.0 – June 15, 2020

- Major additions including new art, and a brand new, third adventure!
- Major adjustments to formatting
- Barring any changes/errata, this might be the last release!

Pre-release Alpha v1.7k – February 14, 2020

- Kickstarter-ready version!
- Added preview art for all the remaining frames!
- More fluff for the fluff gods
- Typo fixes

Pre-release Alpha v1.6 – January 21, 2020

- Mindflayer preview art, including back cover!
- Added preview art for the Nereid!
- Semi-final front cover art!

Pre-release Alpha v1.5.1 – January 5, 2020

- Various tweaks to grammar throughout
- Adjusted the Character Sheet include Keystones and (hopefully) be more visually-appealing
- Added preview art for the Scylla!

Pre-release Alpha v1.5 – December 25, 2019

- Expanded Chapter 4 guidance and Chapter 5 Lore significantly
- Tweaked Pressure Roll Mechanics in Chapter 2
- Added hacking rules for OTOHIME and MINDFLAYER
- New cover art! This one will last until either the WIP cover is finished or there's major change
- There's now a Character Sheet!
- Fixes to [REDACTED]
- AN UNKNOWN ENTRY